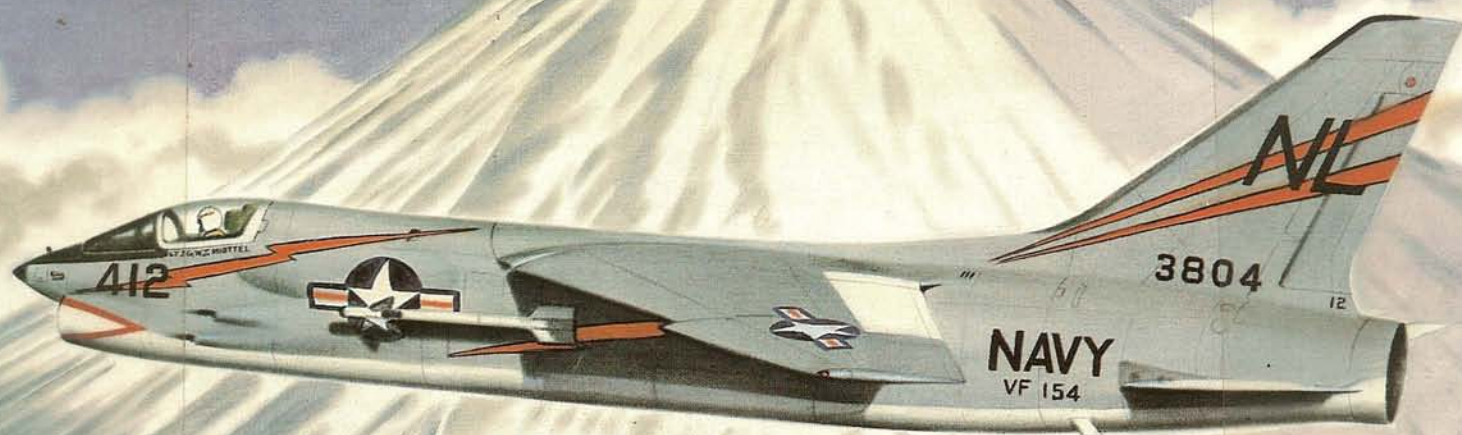


NAVAL FIGHTERS NUMBER NINETEEN

PART FOUR

Vought's F-8 Crusader

NAVY FIGHTER SQUADRONS



BY STEVE GINTER



DEMCO

UNITED STATES NAVY F-8 CRUSADER FIGHT



INTRODUCTION

This book provides brief squadron histories and extensive color and markings for Navy F-8 fighter squadrons. This book differs from previous books in that the aircraft's development and testing was covered in Part One of this four-part F-8 series. Naval Fighters Number Sixteen is 114 pages and covers the F-8's development and testing, foreign users and the F8U-3. Authored by Steve Pace it retails for \$15.95. Naval Fighters Number Seventeen is 66 pages and covers the Navy and Marine RF-8 photo Crusader squadrons. It retails for \$10.95. Naval Fighters Number Eighteen is 66 pages and covers the Marine F-8 fighter squadrons. It retails for \$10.95.

DEDICATION:

TO LCDR GREG CRAIGMILES

Anyone having photos or other information on this or any other naval or marine aircraft, may submit them for possible inclusion in future issues. Any material submitted will become the property of NAVAL FIGHTERS unless prior arrangement is made. Individuals are responsible for security clearance of any material before submission.

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FRONT COVER, 1958 silk painting of LTJG W. J. Miottel's F8U-1 over mount Fuji. INSIDE FRONT COVER: VF-53 F-8J 149195 aboard the Bon Homme Richard in 10-70. (Barry Miller); VF-84 F8U-2 aboard the Independence on 9-24-59. (USN); VF-103 F-8C aboard the Forrestal in 5-64. (USN); VF-162 149710 F-8H aboard the Shangri-La in 6-70. (Barry Miottel)

SOUTHEAST ASIAN EMPLOYMENT OF THE F-8E, 1968

A.) AIR WING F-8 STRIKE TACTICS

The F-8 was used as a fighter and as a bomber. The primary mission however, was assigned to air superiority and daily mission scheduling reflected this priority. Attack missions were assigned only after all fighter commitments had been met. The order for priority of mission assignment was as follows:

1.) COMBAT

- a.) BARCAP & Condition CAP
- b.) TARCAP, MiG CAP, and

FORCE CAP.

- c.) Armed weather recce and point target bombing.

2.) COMBAT SUPPORT

- a.) Photo escort.
- b.) Logistics.

B.) AIRCRAFT CONFIGURATION FOR MISSIONS ASSIGNED ARE STATED BELOW:

MISSION	ORDNANCE
1.) Day TARCAP, BARCAP, MiG CAP, FORCECAP PHOTO ESCORT.	2 AIM-9D
2.) Night FORCECAP, BARCAP, MiG CAP.	1 AIM-9D 1 AIM-9C
3.) Armed Recce/Coastal Recce (download to two LAU-10 when wind over deck is 30 kts or less)	4 LAU-10 4 MK-82
4.) Weather Recce	Night 2 AIM-9D Day forecast good weather 2 LAU-10 Day forecast bad weather 2/4 AIM-9D
5.) Strike.	4 MK-82 6 MK-81 2 MK-83
6.) Flak Suppression	4 CBU-24 4 LAU-10 6 MK-81 4 MK-117 4 MK-82

C.) FIGHTER TACTICS

The basic loose deuce formation stressing section integrity was used for all fighter roles. Squadron flight schedules reflected the practice of flying "teams" on all hops. The squadron tactical organization was utilized and rare exceptions were noted wherein individual sections were split to facili-

tate scheduling. The armament configuration as reflected above was used almost exclusively. Great emphasis was placed on ground and flight checking of the missile and gun system. A missile maximum detection range test was completed on all hops and records maintained on each aircraft to reflect the status of the missile and aircraft armament system. Aircraft guns were fired out on a scheduled basis and preventive maintenance conducted to keep them in good order. The APQ-94 reliability was high and routine BARCAP/FORCECAP Tactics were predicated on its utilization.

1.) SPECIFIC FIGHTER TACTICS. Every attempt was made to utilize standard doctrine. Daylight operations stressed visual lookout and night operations stressed the utilization of the radar and mutual protection measures.

a.) TARCAP. Fighter aircraft were assigned to accompany all strikes which proceeded North of 18°40'N during daylight hours. The TARCAP rendezvoused with the strike group normally at Hon Mat Island at an altitude of 14-18,000 feet and proceeded with the strike group to the target, maintaining close escort throughout the ingress and egress phase of the strike. Standard operating procedure provided for elements of the strike group to separate and conduct recon of prescribed highway/waterway segments after completing initial strikes against Traffic Control Points (TCP). TARCAP was provided for all elements operating North of 18°40'N specifically providing protection against "pop up" enemy aircraft operating in the same general locale. Upon completion of initial TARCAP assignment and after all strike aircraft were feet wet, the fighters joined the Iron Hand and RESCAP attack aircraft and provided close escort during their recce phase or established a barrier in the general locale of recce operations. Since CVW-5 was assigned the Northern Traffic Control Area (TCA) this TARCAP barrier was generally oriented roughly parallel to 19°N and flown between the coast at Phu Dien Chau (19°N) and the Song Ca north-

west of Vinh Son (18°57'N/105-55E). The barrier concept was also employed when hard targets were not assigned to the strike aircraft and several sections were conducting recce missions over various routes and a single F-8 section was unable to provide close escort for all strike aircraft.

After all aircraft were feet wet TARCAP rendezvoused with assigned tanker aircraft (usually the EKA-3B assigned the dual role of ECM/tanker, otherwise a KA-4), refueled to a minimum of 4500 lbs. and checked in with the MiG CAP control ship for assignment as MiG CAP.

b.) BARCAP.

1.) Mission. The mission of the BARCAP is the protection of all friendly forces over the Gulf of Tonkin. Red Crown was the primary control ship for BARCAP on UHF button 14, frequency 281.9 MHz. Station assignment subsequent to the termination of bombing North of 190 N is 050 radial 20-60 miles from TACAN channel 26 located on the PIRAZ ship at 19°37'N 106°47'E. BARCAP's were never assigned additional missions, were normally kept feet wet, and were not to be used for intercepts of MiG's that did not threaten surface forces or support aircraft over the Gulf of Tonkin.

Occasionally the BARCAP station was expanded so that special mission Air Force flights (in particular COMBAT APPLE) were provided close escort at the northeastern extremity of their tracks. This placed the BARCAP up to 110 miles on the 065 radial of channel 26.

2.) PROCEDURES. BARCAP were launched first and recovered last due to the nature of their mission. An expeditious rendezvous was required regardless of weather conditions in order to effect an early on-station relief. Rules required that the relieving CAP must be North of 19°15'N, under radar control and positive radio communication with Red Crown before the on-station section could proceed toward homeplate. When relief was effected, the off-going section returned to homeplate as expeditiously as possible using section random

radar letdown if the weather did not allow for Case I recovery.

Tanking was provided for all BARCAP hops. Normally, one KA-4 was provided and 1500 lbs. of fuel was given to each fighter midway through the cycle. Bingo fuel states were considered when tanking was not available or an undue delay was experienced in on-station relief.

Section loose deuce formation was used exclusively during daylight VFR conditions. Night or IFR formations were normally 4-5 mile radar trail, or close tactical wing if the radar was inoperative. Radio discipline was continuously monitored to eliminate the divulgence of important tactical information to enemy electronic systems. Fuel states and steer times were always given using the base altitude code of the day. Information concerning the status of weapons system, missile system or gun system was relayed either by hand signals or by KY-28 cipher.

The BARCAP was occasionally double cycled to maintain constant coverage on station. In order to achieve realistic utilization of the BARCAP under these situations, a minimum of 5000 lbs. of fuel per F-8 was required. In all cases, but particularly at night, stringent fuel management was observed with trade-off between maximum endurance and high performance. An average fuel flow of 3000 pounds per hour (PPH) while on-station provided the compromise. It was policy to always completely fill aircraft with liquid oxygen for each launch, thus being ready for a double cycle.

BARCAP flying, by its nature, is hours and hours of pure boredom interspersed with moments of sheer exhilaration or terror. Pilots were continually reminded not to get complacent during the hours of boredom or careless during the exhilaration phase as Ho's boys were constantly figuring out ways to bag you.

c.) FORCECAP. The mission of FORCECAP was similar to BARCAP except the assigned control ship varied each day. Each carrier was assigned daily FORCECAP missions and information concerning the controlling unit. Whenever possible, FORCECAP hops were utilized to

train GCI controllers and keep pilots current on AI techniques and terminology. Night FORCECAP commitments were utilized to best advantage in the training of controllers and in pilot refresher hops.

d.) MiGCAP. One section of fighters was assigned as MiGCAP during any cycle when strike aircraft were operating north of 18°40'N. The MiGCAP would be placed under the control of the strike support ship (SSS). They would hold "feet wet" at an altitude of 20-25,000 and maintain a barrier patrol oriented along the coastline adjacent to the operating area. When the MiG threat developed and MiGs had penetrated south of

A VF-211 F-8E is being positioned on the starboard catapult of the USS Hancock (CVA-19) prior to an armed recce mission. 4 LAU-10 Zuni launchers are loaded on the "Y" fuselage racks. (USN)

19°N, the MiGCAP would be vectored immediately toward a position to engage. Whenever there was a second section of fighters available, they would be vectored into a 3-4 mile trail position on the lead aircraft.

TACTICS. The loose deuce section was used exclusively and all available fighters were vectored in pairs toward the engagement area. Run-in altitudes were kept as low as possible, 1000-1500 feet, to remain below the enemy radar screen. Run-in





speed was maintained between 550-600 kts. When engaged, maximum lookout doctrine was required as anytime there were MiGs at twelve o'clock there were also MiGs at six o'clock. The AIM-9D missile performed approximately 60% satisfactorily when it was fired "in envelope". Continued stress was placed on knowing the envelope of the missile and setting up the shooting situation correctly in order to get a kill. Maximum use was made of the VHF jamming capabilities of the EA-6A and the EKA-3B from a position just off the beach.

The fighter pilots aggressively went after the MiGs avoiding any known SAM or flak trap enroute. The most successful attacks were high speed slashing attacks keeping speed high and at all times maintaining the criteria for offensive maneuvering.

CONTROL PROCEDURES. The environment which surrounds the U.S. fighter pilot, i.e., over enemy territory, vectored against a superior enemy GCI system, SAM, and AAA threat, and an equally aggressive enemy fighter pilot, requires the ultimate coordination between the controller and the pilot. CAP aircraft must be given positive vectors to intercept the MiGs. The controller must assume aggressive, positive control and must

endeavor to give a good set-up on the MiGs, specifically, put our CAP between 3 and 9 o'clock 1-3 miles aft of the MiGs. In order to prosecute the intercept with as little penetration as possible into the area of operations for our strike aircraft, the fighter must necessarily be vectored toward the enemy aircraft. However, to reduce the probability of allowing a second enemy fighter section to be vectored to the six o'clock position of friendly fighters and to enhance our capability of cutting the enemy off from sure retreat to the north of 19°, the intercept vector was delayed until such action will make these eventualities more certain. A second MiGCAP section under a separate controller could be used to guard the six o'clock of the first MiGCAP section by trailing at approximately five miles. Experience showed that controllers had difficulty in holding a second MiGCAP section in this optimum position and that usually the vector to intercept presented friendly fighters at the twelve o'clock of at least one section of enemy fighters even though the lead section of friendly fighters was able to gain an immediate offensive. The MiGs and their controllers appeared to aim for this sandwiching tactic, knowing that they were favorably set up for it with a sanctuary to the north which effec-

USS Oriskany (CVA-34) based F-8E zooms toward Tiger Island, off the coast of North Vietnam. Tiger Island was a transfer point for supplies from North Vietnam to the Viet Cong in the south. (USN via Barry Miller)

tively reduced the area of friendly fighter operations by one half.

The necessity for continuing the intercept vector to engagement without regard to "boundaries", rather than making an initial thrust toward the enemy aircraft and turning away cannot be overemphasized. A "break-off" turn at distances less than eighteen miles will prove fatal to the friendly fighters.

Close liaison with the controlling ship (SSS) was maintained through prebriefed tactics and extensive debriefs of the engagements. This liaison and the subsequent understanding of the problems associated with fighter engagements as regards fuel and tanking requirements, clearing six o'clock and positioning F-8 fighters for visual acquisition were meaningful in attempting to prosecute desired tactics. This liaison emphasized the importance of feeding all known information regarding bandits from any source to engaging fighters.

Superiority of numbers was not achieved by the combination of MiG 17s and 21s at any time. On several

occasions sections of MiGs were held on friendly radars trailing egressing F-8s. Whenever possible, additional fresh fighters with sufficient fuel and armament should be positioned to provide cover for disengaging fighters who will be low on fuel and ammunition. Tankers were held as close as possible to the beach and vectored toward spent fighters to expedite fueling.

e.) PHOTO ESCORT. The mission was performed using a fighter configured aircraft as escort to the RF-8G. Typical profile of the mission was a climb to 15,000' to 20,000', rendezvous, and then proceed to the coast-in point using the mapping scale of the APQ-94 for accurate positioning in event of bad weather. Most missions were flown between 5,000 and 6,000 feet with the F-8 flying a loose deuce position. It is important to emphasize staying away from the trail position on the RF-8G as any underlead by enemy gunners would put the escort in the line of fire. The escort is assigned the responsibility of calling all flak, SAM's, and break turns as the photo pilot is normally occupied with navigation and photography. Since most photographic runs were made at 500 to 600 kts., the escort often required tanking upon going feet wet. A typical profile would require tanking of 1,000 to 1,500 lbs. in order to meet a 1+30 time cycle. The primary mission of the escort in countering an air threat is defensive in nature and the fighter must remain with the photo Crusader unless he is required to separate in order to prevent attack.

f.) ARMED RECCE/WEATHER RECCE. All armed/weather recce flights were conducted on an "as needed" basis. CTF-77 established the basic weather recce requirements for each carrier and these flights were assigned to the fighter squadrons. The aircraft were configured to carry either 2 LAU-10 or 4 MK-82 so as to perform an effective armed coastal recce mission while satisfying the requirements of weather reporting. Specific requirements for weather reporting were assigned by Strike Center prior to launch. The pilot was normally required to relay the weather back to the ship at the earliest opportunity and, in addition, be prepared to make recom-

mendations on the execution of strike flights into his assigned area of responsibility. Ordnance was expended on assigned point targets or targets of opportunity. With the advent of good weather in the target areas, Weather Recce missions were combined with TARCAP missions in fighter configured aircraft. Weather information and recommendations were passed back to the force either prior to or following escort of strike aircraft on their

mission.

g.) IRONHAND ESCORT. The practice of escorting Ironhand configured A-4s with F-8 fighters was utilized to release more A-4 aircraft for primary strike missions when the requirements existed. This provided additional visual lookout protection to

VF-211 F-8J, updated F-8E, flying surveillance over a Chinese Communist Hung Chi class merchant ship. (USN)



the pouncer aircraft and provided fighter cover when conducting pouncer missions in a MiG threat area. The responsibilities on the F-8 escort were to provide additional electronic protection to the Ironhand aircraft by continuously maintaining the two plane ALFA formation. The fighter escort assumed the leader was always "on the gages" and called out all flak, SAMs, MiGs and even friendly aircraft that posed a threat to the section. Should an engagement with enemy aircraft become inevitable, the Ironhand leader would pass the lead to the F-8 fighter escort. The fighter would maneuver to defeat the attack as soon as possible and then resume the primary mission of providing cover for the SAM suppressor. The tactical maneuvering performed by the F-8 must stress defense against the MiG threat as the F-8/A-4 were not compatible to offensive tactical maneuvering. Of primary importance, however, is that the strike force will be without needed protection until the pouncer section can reassume its primary mission of SAM suppression.

h.) BOMBER ROLE. The basic delivery techniques for the F-8 strike aircraft was a 45° dive angle with a 5,000 foot AGL release. F-8 bombers were utilized in South Vietnam or Laos under FAC control. At the onset of good weather in the North, the F-8s were assigned point targets in areas of responsibility after meeting all other commitments. When the active MiG threat South of 20° N commenced all F-8 assets were utilized in the fighter role.

D.) NORTH VIETNAMESE MiG TACTICS

During the month of May and June, the tactical employment of the NVN air defense system settled down into somewhat of a predictable pattern. When the MiG-17/21s were launched out of Bai Thuong, the composition was normally 2 MiG-17s and 2 MiG-21s. The MiG-17s proceeded south toward 19°N at an airspeed of .5 IMN and a altitude of 6-8,000 feet. The MiG-21s proceeded west to the border of NVN and Laos and then south to a holding point located generally at 19°08'N/104°50'E. From this initial po-



VF-111 F-8D 147056 firing a Zuni over Vietnam in 1965, while attached to Midway.



sitioning, the MiG-17 penetrated 19°N heading generally 160-180 at 6-8,000 feet and about 550 kts. IAS. The MiG-21s would leave their holding point and proceed southwest at low altitude to the general area of Vinh Son. The scheme apparently was to close control the MiG-17 toward any friendly aircraft in the area to engage and to be bait for the low section of MiG-21s. The attack technique used by the MiG-21 was to gain a position below and behind the friendly aircraft. From this attack position, the MiG-21s would execute one missile firing pass, disengage and use their airspeed and

VF-24 F-8J (updated F-8E) drops MK-83 bombs in April 1972. (USN via B. Miller) performance to zoom up out of range and proceed back north of 19°N.

The MiG-17 seemed more willing to stay and fight. They were normally configured with drop tanks, and no missiles, and attacked with their cannon. A MiG-17 engagement was characterized by a high speed low altitude, turning fight utilizing afterburner to the maximum by both F-8s and MiGs. The MiG pilots seemed aggressive, but were reluctant to utilize their aircraft to its full advantage or to enter into vertical maneuvers.

F-8 VIETNAM DATA

VIETNAM F-8 FIGHTER SQUADRON CARRIER DEPLOYMENTS

CVW-2 03-06-65 to 11-23-65	VF-111	F-8D 4XX/NE	MIDWAY	CVW-19 01-28-64 to 11-21-64	VF-191	F-8E 1XX/NM	BON HOMME RICHARD
CVW-5 04-14-64 to 12-15-64	VF-51 VF-53	F-8E 1XX/NF F-8E 2XX/NF	TICONDEROGA	04-21-65 to 01-13-66	VF-191 VF-194	F-8E 1XX/NM F-8E 2XX/NM	BON HOMME RICHARD
09-28-65 to 05-13-66	VF-51 VF-53	F-8E 1XX/NF F-8E 2XX/NF	TICONDEROGA	10-15-66 to 05-29-67	VF-191 VF-194	F-8E 1XX/NM F-8E 2XX/NM	TICONDEROGA
01-05-67 to 07-22-67	VF-51 VF-53	F-8E 1XX/NF F-8E 2XX/NF	HANCOCK	12-27-67 to 08-17-68	VF-191 VF-194	F-8E 1XX/NM F-8E 2XX/NM	TICONDEROGA
01-27-68 to 10-10-68	VF-51 VF-53	F-8H 1XX/NF F-8E 2XX/NF	BON HOMME RICHARD	04-16-69 to 11-17-69	VF-191 VF-194	F-8J 1XX/NM F-8J 2XX/NM	ORISKANY
03-18-69 to 10-29-69	VF-51 VF-53	F-8J 1XX/NF F-8J 2XX/NF	BON HOMME RICHARD	05-14-70 to 12-10-70	VF-191 VF-194	F-8J 1XX/NM F-8J 2XX/NM	ORISKANY
04-02-70 to 11-12-70	VF-51 VF-53	F-8J 1XX/NF F-8J 2XX/NF	BON HOMME RICHARD	05-14-71 to 12-18-71	VF-191 VF-194	F-8J 1XX/NM F-8J 2XX/NM	ORISKANY
CVW-8 03-05-70 to 12-17-70	VF-111 VF-162	F-8H 1XX/AJ F-8H 2XX/AJ	SHANGRI-LA	06-05-72 to 03-30-73	VF-191 VF-194	F-8J 1XX/NM F-8J 2XX/NM	ORISKANY
CVW-10 05-11-67 to 12-30-67	VF-111 DET 11	F-8C 1XX/AK	INTREPID	CVW-21 10-21-64 to 05-29-65	VF-24 VF-211	F-8C 4XX/NP F-8E 1XX/NP	HANCOCK
06-04-68 to 02-08-69	VF-111 DET 11	F-8C 1XX/AK	INTREPID	11-10-65 to 08-01-66	VF-24 VF-211	F-8C 4XX/NP F-8E 1XX/NP	HANCOCK
CVW-15 12-07-64 to 11-01-65	VF-154	F-8D 4XX/NL	CORAL SEA	01-26-67 to 08-25-67	VF-24 VF-211	F-8C 4XX/NP F-8E 1XX/NP	BON HOMME RICHARD
CVW-16 04-05-65 to 12-16-65	VMF(AW) -212 VF-162	F-8E 1XX/WD F-8E 2XX/AH	ORISKANY	07-18-68 to 03-03-69	VF-24 VF-211	F-8H 4XX/NP F-8H 1XX/NP	HANCOCK
05-26-66 to 11-16-66	VF-111 VF-162	F-8E 1XX/AH F-8E 2XX/AH	ORISKANY	08-02-69 to 04-15-70	VF-24 VF-211	F-8H 2XX/NP F-8J 1XX/NP	HANCOCK
06-16-67 to 01-31-68	VF-111 VF-162	F-8C 1XX/AH F-8E 2XX/AH	ORISKANY	10-22-70 to 06-02-71	VF-24 VF-211	F-8J 2XX/NP F-8J 1XX/NP	HANCOCK
02-01-69 to 09-18-69	VF-111 VF-162	F-8H 1XX/AH F-8J 2XX/AH	TICONDEROGA	01-07-72 to 10-03-72	VF-24 VF-211	F-8J 2XX/NP F-8J 1XX/NP	HANCOCK
				05-08-73 to 01-08-74	VF-24 VF-211	F-8J 2XX/NP F-8H 1XX/NP	HANCOCK

MIG KILLS

PILOT & SQUADRON & DATE

CDR. Harold L. Marr, VF-211, 6-12-66
 LT. Eugene J. Chancy, VF-211, 6-21-66
 LT. (JG) Phillip V. Vampatella, VF-211, 6-21-66
 CDR. Richard M. Bellinger, VF-162, 10-9-66
 CDR. Marshall O. Wright, VF-211, 5-1-67
 CDR. Paul H. Speer, VF-211, 5-19-67
 LT. (JG) Joseph M. Shea, VF-211, 5-19-67
 LT. CDR. Bobby C. Lee, VF-24, 5-19-67
 LT. Phillip R. Wood, VF-24, 5-19-67
 LT. CDR. Marion H. Isaacks, VF-24, 7-21-67
 LT. CDR. Robert L. Kirkwood, VF-24, 7-21-67
 LT. CDR. Ray G. Hubbard, Jr., VF-211, 7-21-67
 LT. Richard E. Wyman, VF-162, 12-14-67
 CDR. Lowell R. Myers, VF-51, 6-26-68
 LT. CDR. John B. Nichols, VF-162, 7-9-68
 CDR. Guy Cane, VF-53, 7-29-68
 LT. Norman K. McCoy, Jr., VF-51, 8-1-68
 LT. Anthony J. Nargi, VF-111, 9-19-68
 Two probables were scored:
 CDR. Harold L. Marr, VF-211, 6-12-66
 LT. (JG) Phil Dempewolf, VF-24, 7-21-67

AIRCRAFT, WEAPON & CARRIER

F-8E/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS HANCOCK
 F-8E/MiG-17, AIM-9/20-mm, USS HANCOCK
 F-8E/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS HANCOCK
 F-8E/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS ORISKANY
 F-8E/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS BON HOMME RICHARD
 F-8E/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS BON HOMME RICHARD
 F-8E/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS BON HOMME RICHARD
 F-8C/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS BON HOMME RICHARD
 F-8C/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS BON HOMME RICHARD
 F-8C/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS BON HOMME RICHARD
 F-8C/MiG-17, 20-mm, USS BON HOMME RICHARD
 F-8E/MiG-17, Zuni/20-mm, USS BON HOMME RICHARD
 F-8E/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS ORISKANY
 F-8H/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS BON HOMME RICHARD
 F-8E/MiG-17, AIM-9/20-mm, USS TICONDEROGA
 F-8E/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS BON HOMME RICHARD
 F-8H/MiG-21, AIM-9, USS BON HOMME RICHARD
 F-8C/MiG-21, AIM-9, USS INTREPID
 Two probables were scored:
 F-8E/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS HANCOCK
 F-8C/MiG-17, AIM-9, USS BON HOMME RICHARD

Note: Five F-8C's eleven F-8E's and two F-8H's got these eighteen official MiG Kills. VF-211 got 7, VF-24 got 4, VF-51 and VF-162 got 2 each and VF-53, VF-111 and VF-191 got 1 each.

An unofficial MiG kill occurred 23 May 1972 when an F-8J from VF-211 on board the USS HANCOCK downed a MiG-17 without firing a shot.

FLEET UTILITY SQUADRON ONE, VU-1 UNIQUE ANTIQUERS



VU-1 was originally commissioned as VJ-1 on 5 October 1925 at NAS San Diego. The squadron fulfilled the missions of aerial photography, simulated attacks, target towing and aerial and anti-aircraft gunnery training. The squadron also participated in the Alaskan Aerial Surveys of 1926 and 1934.

In September 1939, a VJ-1 detachment moved to Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. By June 1940 Ford

Island was home for the entire squadron. After the Pearl Harbor attack on 7 December 1941 VJ-1 provided utility services throughout the Pacific.

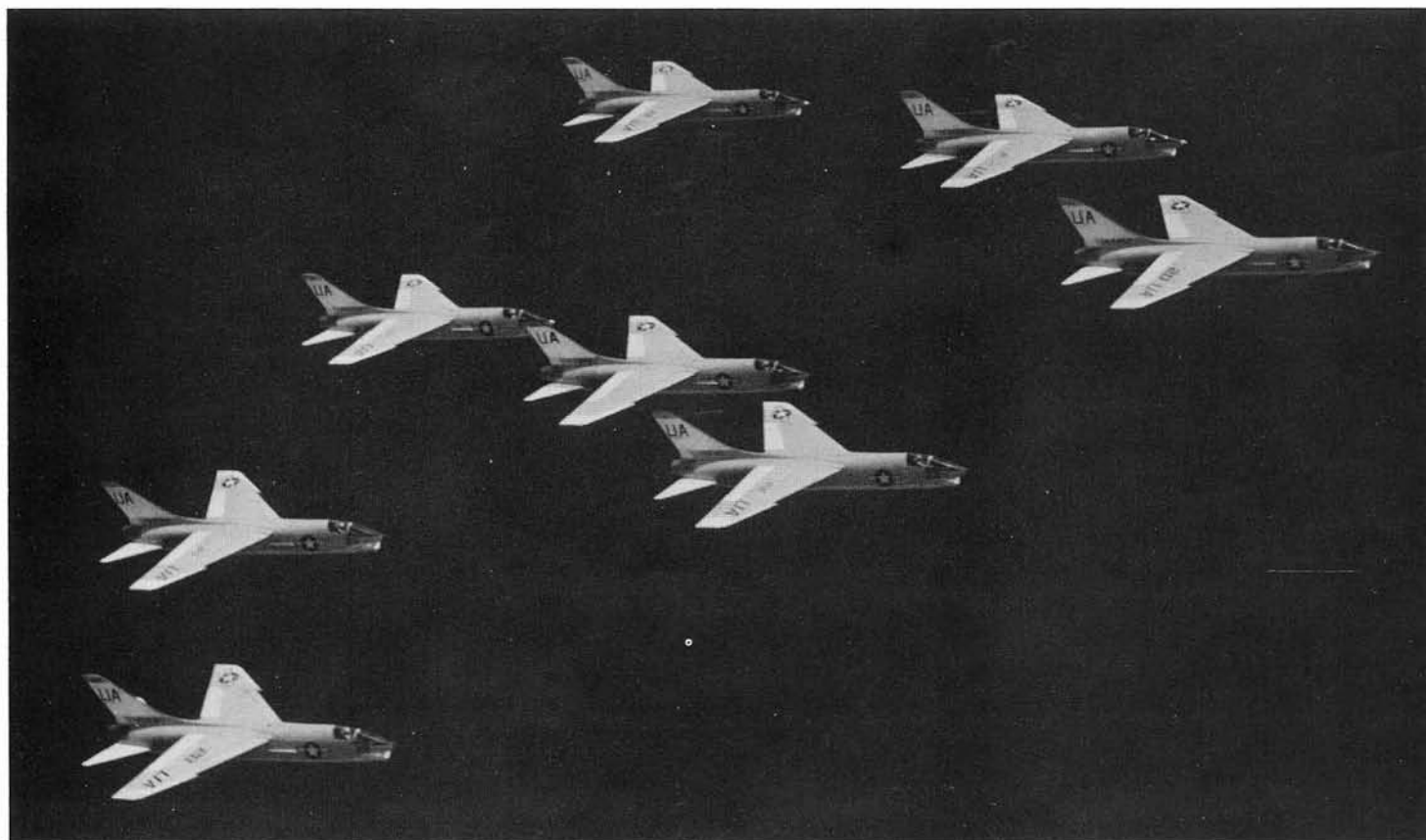
On 31 July 1944 the squadron moved to NAS Moffett Field, California, where it was redesignated Utility Squadron One (VU-1) on 15 November 1946. Then on 30 April 1949 VU-1 was decommissioned.

VU-1 was re-established at NAS Barbers Point, Hawaii, on 20 July 1951 where the squadron provided fleet utility services until redesignated Fleet Composite Squadron One (VC-1) on 1 July 1965.



VU-1 F8U-1 145383 at NAS Point Mugu on 10-21-62. Wide tail stripe and wing tip stripe were red. (Swisher)

Five F-8As and three DF-8As from VU-1 fly over the Pacific in 1964, note red tail and wing tips and location of the wing codes. (Stan Wyckoff)



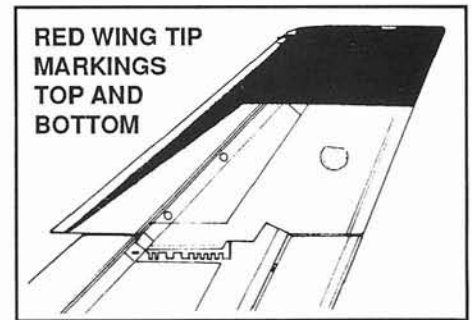
FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON ONE, VC-1 BLUE ALIIS

VC-1 was established on 1 July 1965 when Utility Squadron One was redesignated Fleet Composite Squadron One. Stationed at NAS Barbers Point, Hawaii, VC-1 was responsible for utility and training activities as directed by Commander Fleet Air Hawaii. The squadron's missions were as follows:

- 1.) Radar tracking and intercept training for locally based and transiting ships.
- 2.) Targets for surface-to-air gunnery.
- 3.) Torpedo spotting exercises for submarine training.
- 4.) Photographic missions as assigned to VC-1 Fleet Air Photo Lab.
- 5.) Launch, airborne control, of Regulus Missiles, utilizing ALF Bonham, Kauai, Hawaii.
- 6.) Targets for surface-to-surface gunnery.
- 7.) Adversaries for Operational Readiness Inspections of Pacific Fleet carriers.

The Blue Aliis were initially equipped with five DF-8A and two DT-33B drone control aircraft. Five F-8Cs were used for fleet and air interceptor and target towing duties. Five A-4Bs were used for target towing and aerial refueling services. Photographic duties were handled by one RC-45J, and supply and yoman duties were handled by four US-2Cs. A DP-2E "Neptune" was acquired on 31 May 1966 for launching BQM-34A targets, but the squadron's primary aircraft until retired in 1969 was the F-8 "Crusader". After the phase-out of the F-8s was completed, the squadron's primary asset became the TA-4J "Skyhawks" which VC-1 still flies today.

VC-1 DF-8A 145352 at NAS Barbers Point in 1966; note size of red tail markings. (D. Olson via Jansson)
VC-1 F-8C 146991 at North Island on 7-16-66, with a black fin tip, red tail wing tips and sharkmouth (Jansson)



FLEET UTILITY SQUADRON TWO, VU-2 BLUE TAILS



UTRON TWO was initially a detachment of Utility Squadron Four (VU-4), stationed at NAS Quonset Point, Rhode Island. As the demand for utility services increased UTRON FOUR's detachment was commissioned as Utility Squadron Two (VU-2) on 8 January 1952. The squadron's complement of 30 officers and 185 enlisted men operated the Douglas JD-1 "Invader" and the Grumman F9F "Cougar".

In June 1960 UTRON TWO moved to NAS Oceana, Virginia, leaving Detachment ALFA and the JD aircraft at NAS Quonset Point. The move enabled the squadron to provide services to the Fleet Anti-Air Warfare Training Center at Dam Neck, Virginia, and ships operating in the Virginia Capes areas. VU-2 pilots stowed their tow targets and became "bogey" flying the North American FJ-3 "Fury" for radar tracking exercises and air-to-air intercepts.

In July 1961, VU-2 became the first supersonic Utility Squadron on the Atlantic coast with the assignment of the Chance Vought F8U-1 (F-8A) "Crusader" aircraft. The increased speed of the Crusader enabled the Fleet Anti-Air Warfare Training Center (FAAWTC) to remain abreast of the complexities of modern aircraft intercepts.

Another utility service was added in May 1962 when UTRON TWO, added the DELMAR tow target to its list of services. The DELMAR tow target provided realistic training for air-to-air and surface-to-air missile firing for units of the Atlantic Fleet.

During Fiscal Year 1963, UTRON TWO flew 4,539 accident-free hours with the F-8 aircraft and received a COMNAVAIRLANT citation for this outstanding achievement. In August 1963, VU-2 was selected as a "pilot" squadron for the Navy Maintenance Data Collection System. This system was a forerunner of the 3M maintenance system, and an adjunct of the Air Force 66-1 Program.

In early 1963, VU-2 sent detachments to NAS Jacksonville and NAS Key West, Florida. UTRON TWO Detachment 33 operated from NAS Cecil Field servicing ships from both Charleston, South Carolina, and Mayport, Florida, as well as aircraft squadrons at Cecil Field. At Key West, VU-2 aircraft towed DELMAR targets for squadrons stationed there en-

abling them to train for combat missions with air-to-air missiles.

Transition from the F-8A to the F-8C aircraft occurred during the period of April to September 1964. The newer F-8C, with its integrated visual presentation, allowed squadron pilots to train for high speed all-weather intercepts and evaluate the performance of land and sea based student air controllers. In January 1965 UTRON TWO pilots flew a total of 570 Crusader hours, which represented an all-time high flight hour month for the squadron.

VU-2 Det ALFA, which remained at Quonset Point, continued to provide aerial utility services to naval units operating in the Narragansett Bay and offshore Boston operating areas. DET ALFA also provided continuing support to periodic routine service requirements for Oceana-based VU-2 F-8 aircraft that deploy to Quonset Point when high performance aircraft service requirements arise. DET ALFA transitioned to the Grumman US-2C "Tracker" during the period 26 December 1963 to April 1964, at which time the Invader was phased out. DET ALFA was redesignated VC-2 Detachment ALFA on 1 July 1965, and subsequently VC-2 Detachment Quonset Point on 1 August 1966. On 1 July 1965, UTRON TWO was redesignated Fleet Composite Squadron Two (VC-2).

F-8A with blue & white trim in 1962.(DM)



FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON TWO, VC-2 BLUE TAILS



Stationed at NAS Oceana with a permanent detachment at NAS Quonset Point, Fleet Composite Squadron Two was established on 1 July 1965 when Utility Squadron Two was redesignated. VC-2 was initially equipped with eleven F-8C and four US-2C air-

craft. The Blue Tails flew the "Crusader" until 1971 when they were completely replaced by "Skyhawks".

VC-2 provided jet and propeller services to the Atlantic Fleet along the East coast and conducted combat

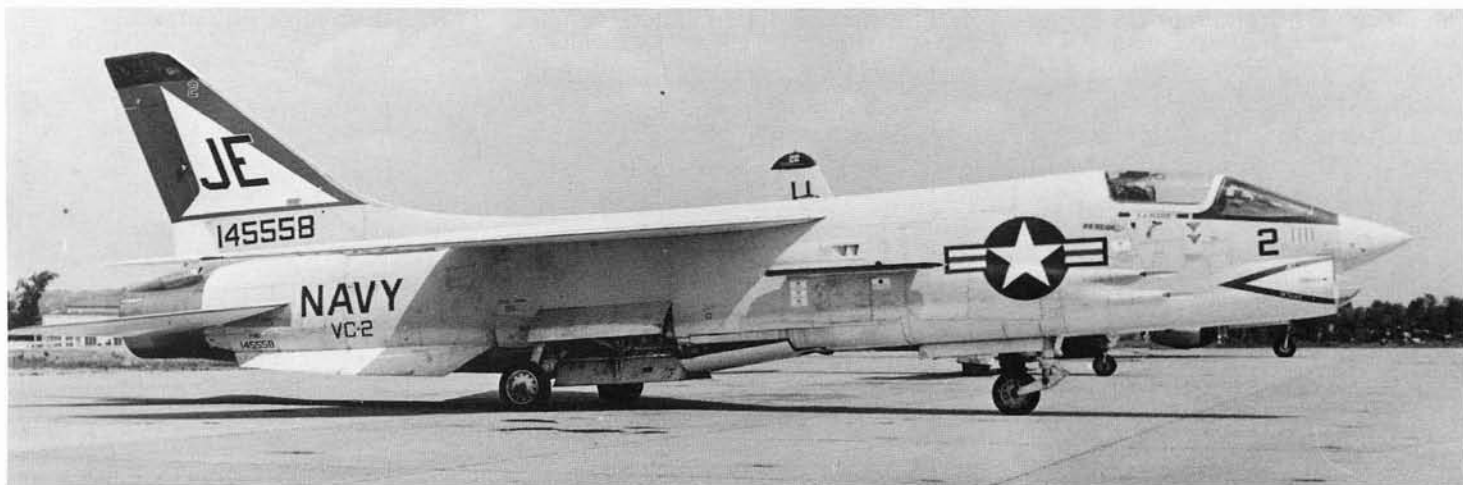
readiness training for the development of experience and proficiency of assigned F-8 pilots.

F-8A 141351 on 5-31-67; tail is dark blue and fin cap is flat black with a gold cross. (Jansson) F-8K 145575 in August 1970. (D. Kasulka via Jansson)





Six VC-2 F-8K Crusaders from NAS Oceana flying over Virginia Beach in April 1970. (USN)
 VC-2 F-8C 145558 at NAS Willow Grove in September 1966; note black #2 outlined in white on the upper blue tail. (Jansson)



F-8C 146918 from VC-2 at NAS Oceana on 5-31-67; note the red lightning bolt on the ventral fin. (Swisher)



ALL WEATHER FIGHTER SQUADRON THREE, VF(AW)-3 BLUE NEMESIS

VC-3 was established on 2 May 1949, from Detachment One, Fleet All-Weather Training Unit, Pacific (FAWTUPAC). The squadron transferred from NAS North Island to NAS Moffett Field, California, in October 1949. At Moffett the squadron flew Grumman F6F-5Ns, TBM-3E/3Ns, an AD-2Q and an SNB-5.

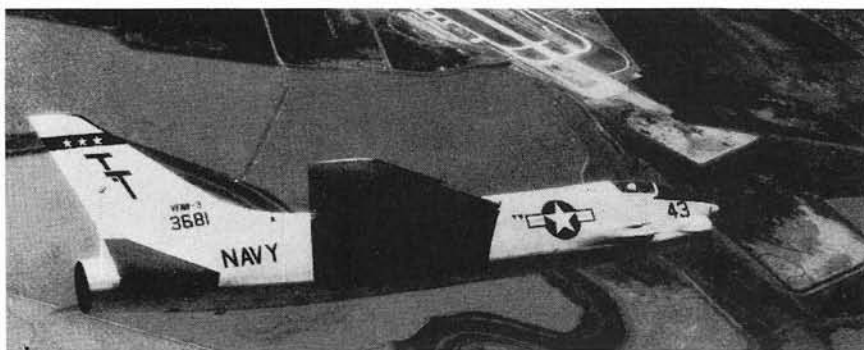
VC-3 was tasked with the mission of providing nightfighter and attack detachments to the Pacific Fleet. To this end the squadron received F4U-5Ns and F8F-1Ns. On 30 November 1950 the F3D "Skyknight" brought the squadron into the jet age. The F3Ds would soon be followed by F2H-2B and F2H-3 "Banshees". 1954 saw the F7U "Cutlass", FJ-3 "Fury" and the F9F-6 "Cougar" added to VC-3's inventory. In April 1956 the F4D-1 "Skyray" arrived and VC-3 was redesignated VF(AW)-3 on 1 July 1956. Three other new aircraft were operated by VF(AW)-3 prior to its disestablishment on 2 May 1958: the F3H-2N "Demon", F8U-1 (F-8A) "Crusader" and A4D-1 "Skyhawk".

142415 and 142409 on 5-18-57, note open rocket tray as seen on early F8U-1s. (Larkins)

Since August 1954 the squadron had also operated as a transitional training unit for high performance aircraft. Six officers and 30 enlisted men would participate in the Fleet Indoctrination Program (FIP). Upon completion of the 600 flight hour program, the team returned to Moffett to train a core unit of squadron pilots, usually the CO or XO, ops officer, and maintenance officer, who in turn trained the transitioning squadron.



F8U-1 143681 approaches NAS Moffett Field, the first Crusader College. Tail stripe was dark blue and rudder atypically painted gull grey instead of white.



AIR DEVELOPMENT SQUADRON THREE, VX-3



VX-3 F8U-1 141352 is seen being hoisted onboard the FDR for carrier qualifications on 3-31-57. Early F8U-1s were unusual in that the rudders were not white and the afterburner section was painted. (National Archives)

Air Development Squadron Three (VX-3) was formed on 20 November 1948, by merging two squadrons of CVLG-1, VF-1L and VA-1L, and was placed under the operational control of Commander Operational Development Force. VX-3's main mission was threefold: to evaluate new and already existing naval aircraft, airborne equipment and methods; recommend methods for the most effective tactical employment of aircraft and equipment; and to recommend training procedures and countermeasures for these aircraft and methods. Based at NAS Atlantic City, New Jersey, VX-3 boasted some of the Navy's most experienced aviators, and from 1948 until decommissioning flew nearly every new model of carrier-based aircraft in the fleet.

The squadron received its first Vought F8U-1 "Crusader" in December 1956. VX-3 also received the F11F-1 "Tiger" and F4D-1 "Skyray" shortly thereafter. In April 1957, VX-3 became the first Navy squadron to operate off the deck of an aircraft carrier with these new fighters. The squadron went onboard the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt (CVA-42) for carrier qualifications and advanced TACAN work. VX-3's Commanding Officer, Captain Dose, made the first fleet landing of the new F8U-1 while

aboard CVA-42.

On 6 June 1957, CAPT Dose and LCDR P. Miller, Jr., took off from the USS BonHomme Richard (CVA-31) on the west coast and landed on the USS Saratoga (CVA-60) on the east coast, a distance of 2,200 miles, in the record-breaking time of three hours and twenty-eight minutes.

Not all Crusader operations at VX-3 led to glory; some led to blood-n-guts. In early December 1956 LT Blake landed short of the runway in the dirt. Then on 21 December a VX-3 pilot on his first (and last) Crusader flight raised the wing at 500 knots and lost the wing, the aircraft, and his life. The dubious honor of the first F-8 carrier accident fell to VX-3 when on 2 April 1957 LCDR Miller sheared off a landing gear on touchdown aboard CVA-42. Three days later CDR Boyd lost power on takeoff from the F.D.R. and executed a successful ditching only to drown along with the helo rescue crewman.

The squadron continued to operate the F8U-1 and later the F8U-2 in projects for mirror landing systems, Sidewinders, Zuni, in-flight refueling and aerial tow targets. Air Development Squadron Three was decommissioned on 1 March 1960.





VX-3 F8U-1s 141358 #5, 141362 #1, and 141347 #6 being serviced in front of the FDR's island in April 1957 during car-quals. (Vought)

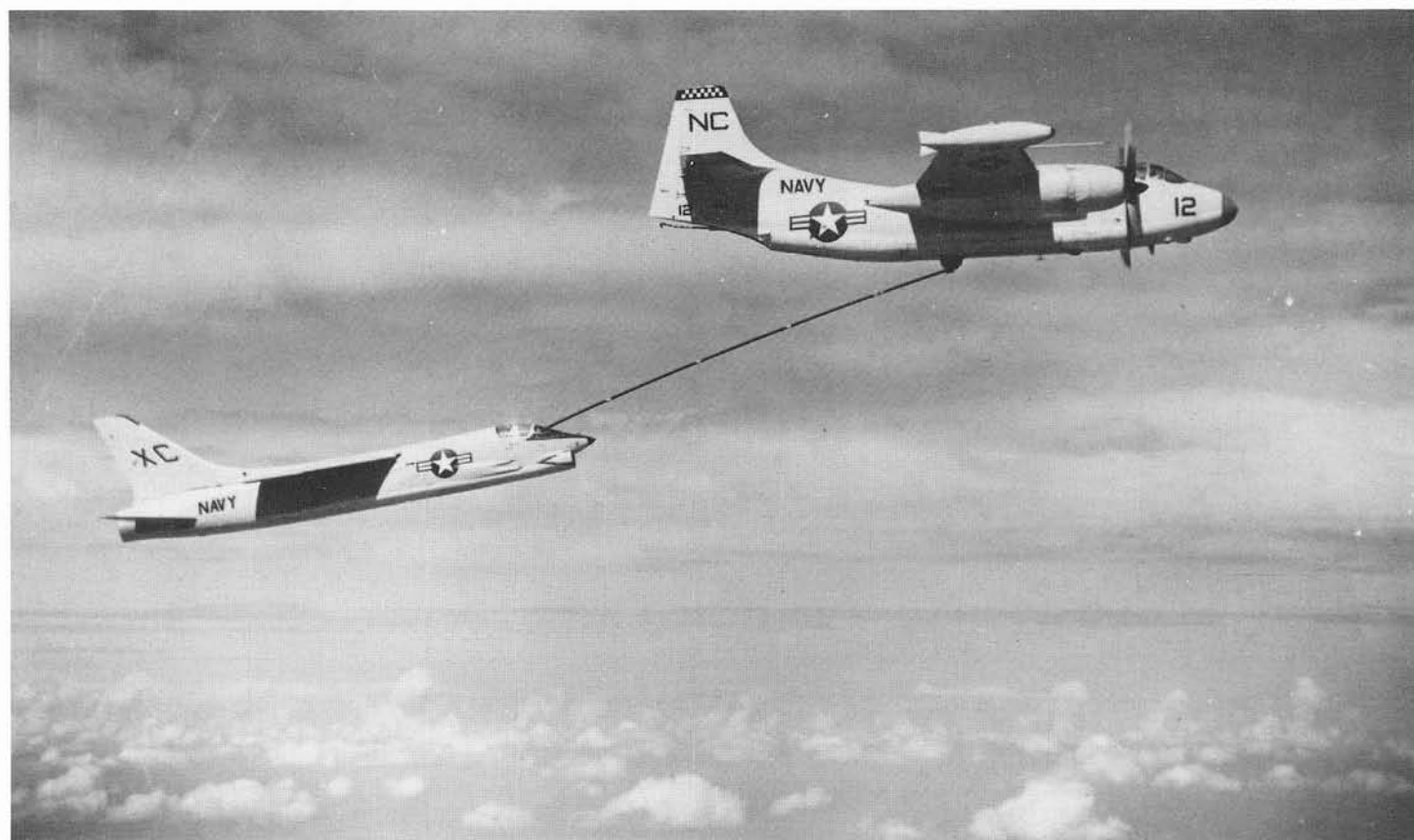
141357 and 141358 preparing for launch, note location of the wing codes and the call number on the tail-cone as well as the forward fuselage. (Vought)

141362 landing on CVA-42. The raised bulkhead on the front of the wing is red. (Vought)



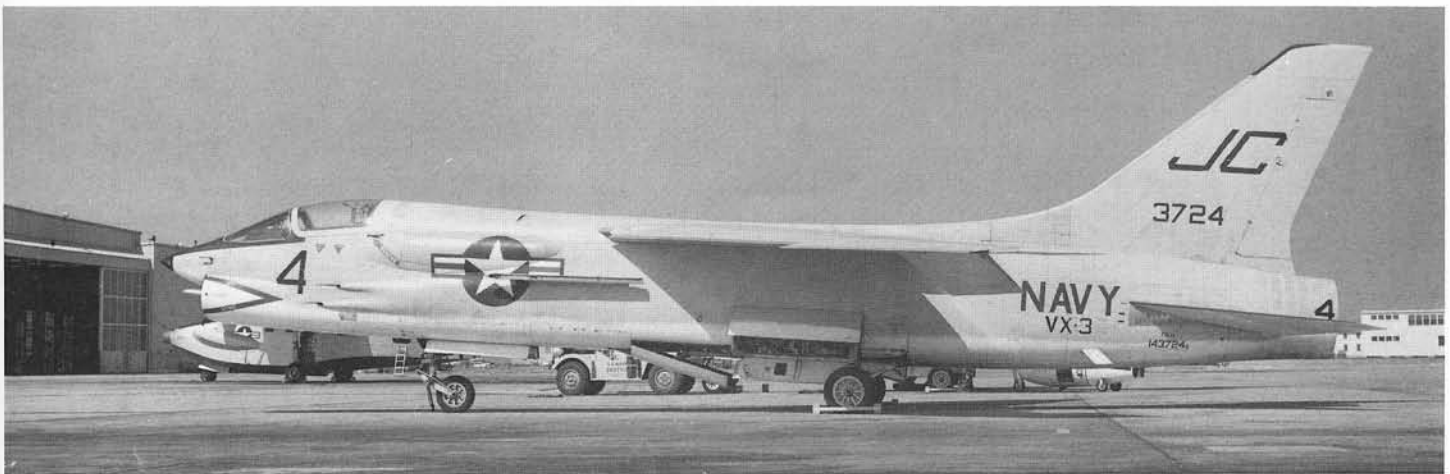
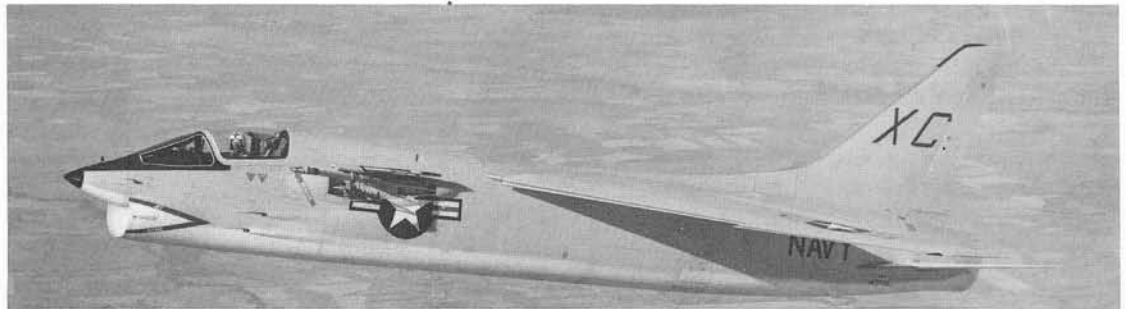


VX-3 F8U-1 141358 taxis forward prior to launch from the FDR in April 1957. (USN via Steve Pace)
 F8U-1 from VX-3 conducting in-flight refueling tests from a VAH-11 AJ-2 "Savage" tanker aircraft. (USN via NASM)

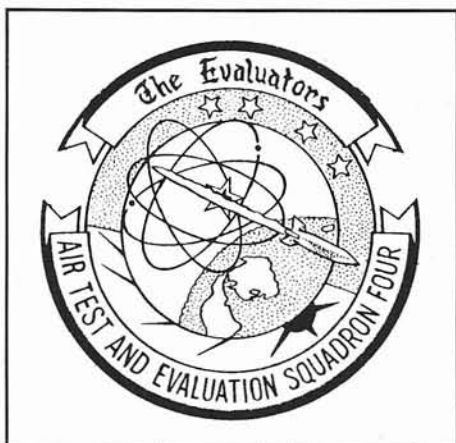




On 6-6-57 CAPT Dose and LCDR Miller prepair to launch from CVA-31 on their record breaking west to east speed run.(USN) 143706 during refueling trials. (AAHS) F8U-1 143724 sporting VX-3s new JC tail code in late 1957. (G. S. Williams via Pace)



AIR DEVELOPMENT SQUADRON FOUR, VX-4 VANGUARDS/EVALUATORS



VX-4 F8U-2N (F-8D) 147050 on 5-19-62 with "Y" style missile racks; note upper Sidewinder has barber pole red stripes on the nose and a lower blue control fin. Tail stripe is blue with white stars. (D. Olson via Jansson)

Air Development Squadron Four was commissioned on 15 September 1952, when the Commander Naval Air Force Pacific Fleet directed CDR James G. Sliney to form and command the squadron at the Naval Missile Center, Point Mugu, California. The squadron's mission was to conduct projects dealing with the evaluation of air-launched guided missiles, namely the Sparrow I. VX-4's mission evolved into the development of a missile or missile component and its best use as a weapon, to conduct tests and evaluations of aircraft weapons systems and support systems in an operational environment, and to develop all-weather intercept tactics for air-launched missiles.

The Vanguards of VX-4 were initially equipped with the F7U and F3D, but with the advent of the Bullpup and Sparrow III missiles, the squadron acquired the FJ, A4D, F3H, F8U and F4D for advanced missile test programs. As the Evaluators the squadron used the Crusader into the 1970s for Sidewinder and Zuni development. Virtually all the different variants of the F-8 were used by VX-4 at one time or another.

VX-4 F8U-1 143793 on 5-19-62 with wind driven silver cable reel on the fuselage and a red DEL MAR target attached to the black wing-mounted target housing. Tail stripe is blue with white stars and rudder is atypically gull grey. (Olson via Jansson)





VX-4 F-8E 150306 carrying eight iron bombs. Red borders have been added to the tail stripe. (USN via Wyckoff)

150306 on the ground on 12-21-62 with an XKD2B-1 (AQM-37) missile on the port wing pylon. (USN via Wyckoff)



VX-4 F-8E 150892 at Pt. Mugu on 10-18-64. The tail, wing, and fuselage stripes were dark blue bordered by red with white stars. OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION FORCE is printed under the wing. The fin tip is black and the afterburner section is painted. (Swisher)





VX-4 F-8E 150315 on 5-20-67 with eight iron bombs and four Sidewinders. Note gull grey and white wing pylon. (Swisher)

VX-4 F-8J 150898 on 5-18-68 with flaps full down and OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION FORCE below wing. (Swisher)



VX-4 F-8H 147904 at NAS North Island on 10-3-70. Tail and fuselage flash are dark blue bordered by red with white stars. (C. J.)





VX-4 F-8Js 149143 and 150315 launch during the NAS Point Mugu Space Fair in 1967. (Craig Kaston via Stan Wyckoff)

VX-4 F-8H 148681 taxiing in after landing at the 1970 Pt. Mugu air show. (via Burger)



VX-4 F-8H 148692 in flight over the runways at Pt. Mugu on 10-15-71. (USN)



FLEET UTILITY SQUADRON FOUR, VU-4 DRAGON FLYERS



VU-4 was originally commissioned as VJ-4 on 15 November 1940 at NAS Norfolk. Subsequent home bases were Guantanamo, San Juan, Squantum, Chincoteague and Oceana. The squadron has operated over thirty types of aircraft from its first PBV-1 Catalina to the supersonic F-8 Crusader.

The mission of VJ-4 during World War II was to fly anti-submarine patrol and conduct rescue operations. After the war the squadron was redesignated Utility Squadron Four and its mission was changed to that of fleet support in air-to-air and surface-to-air weapons training as well as training fleet air intercept controllers and radar and ECM operators.

In 1952, the squadron added F6F-5K and F9F-5K drones to its inventory for use as realistic targets for the fleet. On 5 June 1958 P2V-5 and UB-26J aircraft were obtained for launching jet powered KDA drones. The Delmar towed target arrived in February 1960, one month after the squadron became responsible for Replacement Pilot Training for FJ-3M Furys. This lasted until August 1961 when VU-4 pilots entered F-8 training at MCAS Beaufort. The F8U-1 (F-8A) was flown until May 1964 when it was

replaced by the F-8C. The Hayes target arrived at about this time and, along with the Delmar target, the squadron was able to field high speed, supersonic, highly realistic targets.

In July 1964 UTRON FOUR Detachment Alfa was formed at NAS Cecil Field, also operating the F-8C and US-2C aircraft, to provide services to the Fleet in the Jacksonville Operating Area. During the Cuban Crisis, the Detachment was directed to provide round-the-clock courier services between Guantanamo Bay and various stateside headquarters locations, and was commended for its performance by the Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic Fleet.

UTRON FOUR was redesignated VC-4 on 1 July 1965.

Mystery F-8A on 3-18-63. Plane carries VU-4 JF tail code with VMF-333 rudder and fuselage flashes in red ? (D. Olson)



VU-4 F-8Cs 146933 and 145588 over southeast Virginia on 13 April 1965, tails are red with a white circle. (USN)



FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON FOUR, VC-4 DRAGON FLYERS

Fleet Composite Squadron Four was commissioned when VU-4 was redesignated VC-4 on 1 July 1965. In November 1966, the squadron began Replacement Pilot Training in the F-8. Pilots were received from the F-8 CRAW, VF-124 with minimum time in type and VC-4 had the responsibility to complete a flight syllabus which would enable newly assigned pilots to contribute to the squadron's mission. Twelve replacement pilots were thus trained during 1967.

On 22 March 1967 F-8C 145588 piloted by LT Karl B. Wagner, experienced an engine explosion and flameout while on a routine service mission. The pilot determined the aircraft was on fire and ejected, parachuting safely to the ground near Murfreesboro, North Carolina. In June 1968, an F-8B was transferred out to LTV, Dallas, as the prototype F-8L.

During 1968 VC-4 participated in Operation Springboard from 26 January until 25 March and in Operation

Racer Run from 21 June until 26 June and finally in the Operational Readiness Inspection of the USS Shangri-La (CVA-38) from 10 December until 20 December.

In the spring of 1969 VC-4 started transitioning its F-8Bs to F-8Ks. The squadron's F-8s were utilized in Operation Springboard that year. In 1969 the squadron supported the fleet by providing DETS to NAS Roosevelt Roads, MCAS Beaufort, NAS New Orleans, Homestead AFB, NAS Key West, and Patrick AFB.

1970 saw VC-4 F-8K DETS going to NAS New Orleans once and NAS Key West seven times. However, by the end of the year the Crusaders were all but phased out with only one F-8K remaining (146910). On 30 April 1971 VC-4 was disestablished.

VC-4 F-8C 146983 on 5-31-67, minus the squadron's colorful red tail markings. F-8C 146933 on 5-24-67 with a tow cable fuselage pylon and the red tail. Fin tip was black with a gold cross. (Jansson)





VC-4 DETACHMENT CECIL F-8C on 5-25-67 with red tail and flat black fin cap and white aircraft numbers. (Jansson)

VC-4 F-8C 145592 on 5-23-67, white circle on tail is bordered by black and area above missile rail is black. (Swisher)



VC-4 F-8K 146941 at NAS Oceana on 6-20-70 with new red tail markings, and the black "JF" tail code shadowed in white. (Stephen H. Miller via Dave Menard)

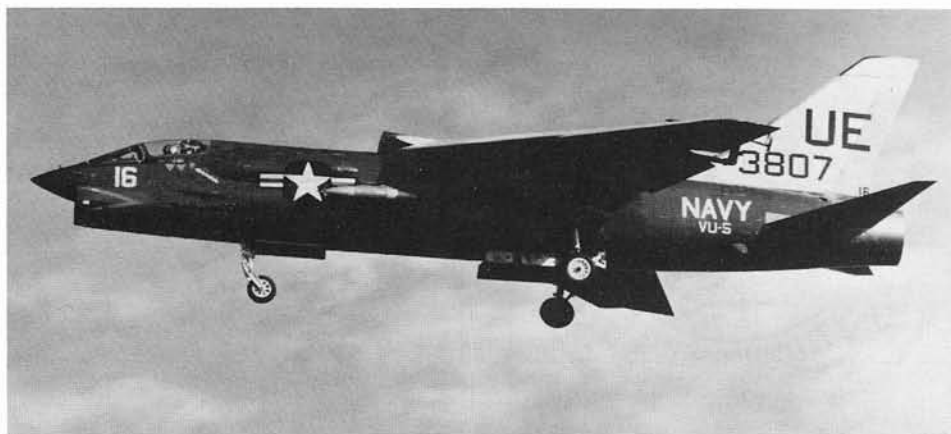


FLEET UTILITY SQUADRON FIVE, VU-5 WORKHORSE OF FLEET

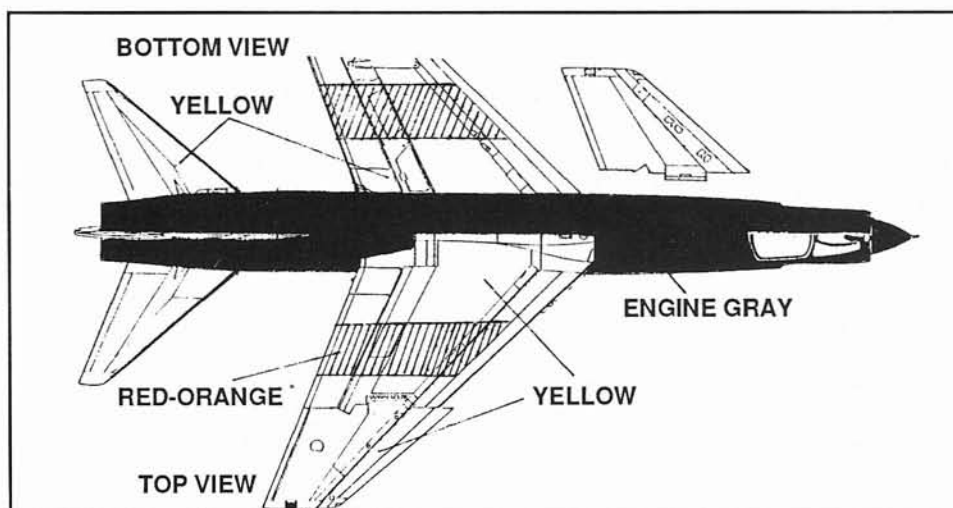


Fleet Utility Squadron Five (VU-5) was established on 16 August 1950 in order to provide utility services to the fleet in and around the islands of Japan. As the squadron and its services expanded, UTRON 5 was required to send detachments to carriers and bases as far from its home base of NAS Atsugi as NAS Cubi Point, Philippines. VU-5's primary mission was to provide targets for both the aerial and surface components of the fleet. Other missions consisted of photo services, adversary missions, airborne control of surface launched missiles, and carrier on-board delivery (COD) services.

UTRON 5 received five F-8A Crusaders in 1962 to use as high speed target tugs and adversary aircraft. Some of the F-8As were replaced with four F-8Ds in 1965, with the squadron being redesignated Fleet Composite Squadron Five on 1 July 1965.



UTRON 5 F8U-1 (F-8A) 143807 landing at NAS Atsugi on 11-6-62. (T. Matsuzaki) Colors were engine gray fuselage, yellow vertical and horizontal tailplanes and wings with a red-orange rudder and wing stripe. Landing gear and interior gear doors and engine intake were white.



VU-5 F-8A 143763 at the Naval Air Rework Facility (NARF), NAS North Island on 6-12-65. The vertical and outboard wings were yellow and the rudder was red. (Jansson)



FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON FIVE, VC-5 CHECKERTAILS



Fleet Composite Squadron Five (VC-5) was commissioned on 1 July 1965 when UTRON FIVE (VU-5) was redesignated. VC-5 is based ashore at NAS Atsugi, Japan. Two permanent detachments, Detachment NAHA (DET ALPHA) and Detachment CUBI PT (DET BRAVO), are based ashore at Naha AFB, Okinawa, and NAS Cubi Point, Luzon, Philippines, respectively. The squadron's mission is to provide air services for fleet training tasks. The following tasks are assigned:

- 1.) To provide towed targets and target drones for surface-to-air or air-to-air gunnery and rocket or guided missile firing.
- 2.) To provide still photography, motion pictures and aerial photographic services as required by the fleet.
- 3.) To provide targets for CIC and ECM exercises and radar calibration.
- 4.) To perform such other utility services for the forces afloat, within the capabilities of the aircraft assigned, which will aid in the advancement in the training of these forces.
- 5.) To perform administrative and logistic flights within the capabilities of the aircraft assigned.
- 6.) To maintain pilot combat readiness training within the capabilities of the aircraft assigned.

During 1966 the following aircraft were assigned: VC-5 Atsugi, 14 F-8C, 4 US-2C, 1 RC-45J; VC-5 DET NAHA, 4 DF-8F, 2 DP-2E, 3 US-2C, 2

UH-34E; VC-5 DET CUBI PT, 5 A-4B, 4 US-2C, 1 RC-45J.

The TDU-22 series target replaced the DELMAR targets and was used for SAM and AAM firings as well as ships gunnery exercises during 1966. In April and March 1966, VMF(AW)-323 deployed to Naha to conduct what was up to that time the largest scale air-to-air missile exercise ever against this target. A total of 38 missiles were fired. In December 1966 the USS Enterprise successfully fired a deck mounted Sparrow III against a towed TDU-22B.

During the period 2 July through 14 July 1966, VC-5 transferred its entire inventory of eleven F-8D aircraft to VF-24 in return for fourteen older and worn F-8Cs from Fighting Two Four.

VC-5 would operate almost all variants of the Crusader until its phase out in 1970. These included the F-8A, F-8B, F-8C, F-8D, DF-8F, and F-8K.

VC-5 F-8B 145478 at Naha AFB sporting the squadron's checkertail. (Miller/ Menard)



Close-up of VC-5 red-orange and yellow checkerboard tail pattern. (via Menard)



COs F-8C on 5-21-67 with TDU-22 target and yellow fuselage stripe while at NAS Atsugi.(T. Matsuzaki)



VC-5 DF-8F at NAS Atsugi on 5-18-69 in the colorful drone director markings. Fuselage was engine grey & the vertical tail was red-orange. The horizontal tail was yellow and the wing was yellow with a red-orange stripe. (Matsuzaki)



VC-5 DF-8F attached to DET NAHA. Note tail is missing the squadron's UE tail code; tail is red-orange. (Be-secker via Lionel Paul)



VC-5 DF-8F at Danang in September 1970. Colors are that of a drone director aircraft as described above. A checkerboard tail has been added to this colorful paint scheme, the air intake is white.(Barry Miller)



UTILITY SQUADRON SEVEN, VU-7 UTRON SEVEN



Utility Squadron Seven (VU-7) was commissioned on 4 December 1942 at NAS Alameda, California, with the mission of providing utility aircraft services to units of the Pacific Fleet. These services included the towing of aerial targets and launching of self-propelled drone targets for surface-to-air and air-to-air gunnery and missile firing; providing airborne targets for the fleet Anti-aircraft Warfare Training Center; radar calibrations; Electronic Countermeasure exercises; inflight refueling; and other utility and administrative services within the capabilities of the assigned aircraft, which were F-8 Crusaders and A-4 Skyhawks.

UTRON SEVEN was based at



VU-7 F8U-1 143764 at NAS North Island on 8-25-62. Tail from above the numbers to below the fin cap is da-glo red and the "UH" is bordered by white. (Clay Jansson)

nine different locations during its twenty three years of existence. The squadron was based at Pearl Harbor from July 1944 until October 1945 with two detachments at Barbers Point, Hawaii, and Agana, Guam.

While flying the F-8, UTRON SEVEN was based at NAS Miramar, California. The squadron had been previously based there from April 1949 to September 1951, when Miramar was an Auxilliary Air Station.

With the advent and implementation of each new weapon to the fleet, VU-7 has had to provide a target for use in training of personnel for the operation of the new weapon and weapon system. Development of the

air-to-air missile, for instance, required a target technique which would simulate fast, high flying enemy aircraft for missile target practice. The F-8 used the Hayes towed target and the AQM-37A rocket propelled target. With them VU-7 provided high altitude, supersonic targets for firing of live missiles even in darkness or instrument flying weather.

In 1965 the squadron's assets consisted of four F-8As, fourteen F-8Cs, four DF-8Fs and nine A-4Bs. VU-7 was redesignated Fleet Composite Squadron Seven (VC-7) on 1 July 1965.

F-8A on 11-19-62 towing a DELMAR target. Tail and wing flash are dark red and wing bracket was red. (USN)





VU-7 F-8A 145385 at NAS North Island on 5-2-64, with silver cable reel mounted on the fuselage and the wing mounted pylon used exclusively for the HAYES target. The black dot under the wing was a cable pulley. The cable ran from the pylon through the pulley to the wind driven cable reel. Notice pattern of the red folded wing tip. (Harry Gann)



VU-7 F-8C 146995 at Edwards AFB on 5-16-65. Vertical tail markings and fuselage rack are red. Pilot's steps are extended and the speed brake is in its normal partially opened parked position. (William Swisher)

VU-7 DF-8F 143691 at NAS Miramar on 4-3-65. The fuselage is engine gray, and the tail is red-orange with a flat black fin cap, and the wings and horizontal tailplanes are yellow. Landing gear and interior doors are white. (William Swisher)



FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON SEVEN, VC-7 TALLYHOers



Fleet Composite Squadron Seven was established on 1 July 1965 when Utility Squadron Seven was redesignated VC-7 and placed under the command of Commander Fleet Air Miramar. At that time, the squadron had a complement of four DF-8A, fourteen F-8C, and thirteen A-4B aircraft. The DF-8F replaced the DF-8As in early 1966 and later that year three F-4 Phantoms were acquired. In 1967 the squadron received four RF-8A photo birds (see Naval Fighters Number Seventeen). The F-8K arrived in 1969 and the squadron was decom-

missioned in 1970.

After having been nameless for 23 years, VC-7 selected the name "TALLYHOers" as a squadron nickname on 10 December 1965. The name is derived from the term "TALLYHO" which means "Target Visually Sighted". VC-7 pilots used the term approximately 1500 times a month while flying practice air intercepts for various naval activities in Southern California.

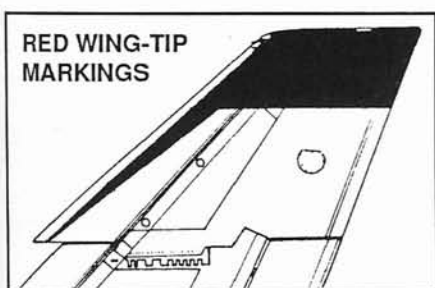
DF-8F 145319 on 2-19-66 with "TALLYHOers" on the tail. Red tailed RF-8A 145636 on 8-26-67 (William Swishwer)





VC-7 F-8C 146931 at NAS Miramar on 2-19-66. "TALLYHOers" was painted on the red tail. Tail code "UH" was black bordered by white. (Jansson)

VC-7 F-8K 147006 takes the runway at Miramar during the 1970 air show. The squadron insignia is painted on the red tail. (Ginter)



VC-7 DF-8A 144427 at the Pima County Air Museum in July 1976. Today she has been repainted in the markings of a VF-32 F-8A (see VF-32). (Ginter)

Closer view of F-8K 147005 at NAS Miramar on 3-14-70. (Clay Jansson)



FLEET UTILITY SQUADRON EIGHT, VU-8 RED TAILS



Originally designated GMSRON-2 (Guided Missile Squadron Two), Fleet Utility Squadron Eight (VU-8) was established on 1 July 1958 at NAS Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. The squadron's first F-8 Crusader came aboard on 15 November 1963. VU-8 used the F-8 primarily as a drone control aircraft. Eight DF-8Fs were on hand on 8 January 1965, when VU-8 installed the first Delmar Tow Systems. On 18 June 1965 VU-8 was redesignated Fleet Composite Squadron Eight (VC-8).



FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON EIGHT, VC-8 RED TAILS



Fleet Composite Squadron Eight was created on 18 June 1965 when VU-8 was redesignated VC-8. Still stationed at NAS Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, the Red Tails utilized seven types of aircraft to accomplish its missions of keeping the Atlantic Fleet combat ready through use of expendable and recoverable targets and through ECM and intradiction flights against fleet ships. These aircraft were: DP-2E and P-2E "Neptunes", UH-34 "Sea Horses", DT-28B "Trojans", DF-8F "Crusad-

ers", QF-9G "Cougars" and A-4B "Skyhawks". VC-8 continued to fly the Crusader until 1973.

VU-8 DF-8Fs were marked identically to the VC-8 DF-8F shown below and on the following page. Colors were engine gray fuselage, yellow vertical and horizontal tailplanes and wings with a red-orange rudder and wing stripe. For the location of the wing stripe see the drawing on page 26. Landing gear and interior doors were white. Standard red intake warning chevron is barely visible in black and white. (Barry Miller)





VC-8 DF-8F 144456 at NAS Brooklyn, New York, on 6-4-67. Name painted under the canopy is ENS RON COLE. Note the blade antennas behind the canopy and behind the nose gear. (Clay Jansson)



VC-8 DF-8F 143682 at Davis-Monthan on 3-19-71. (G. Liang)

VC-8 DF-8F 144443 at NAS North Island on 6-8-69. (D.Kasulka)

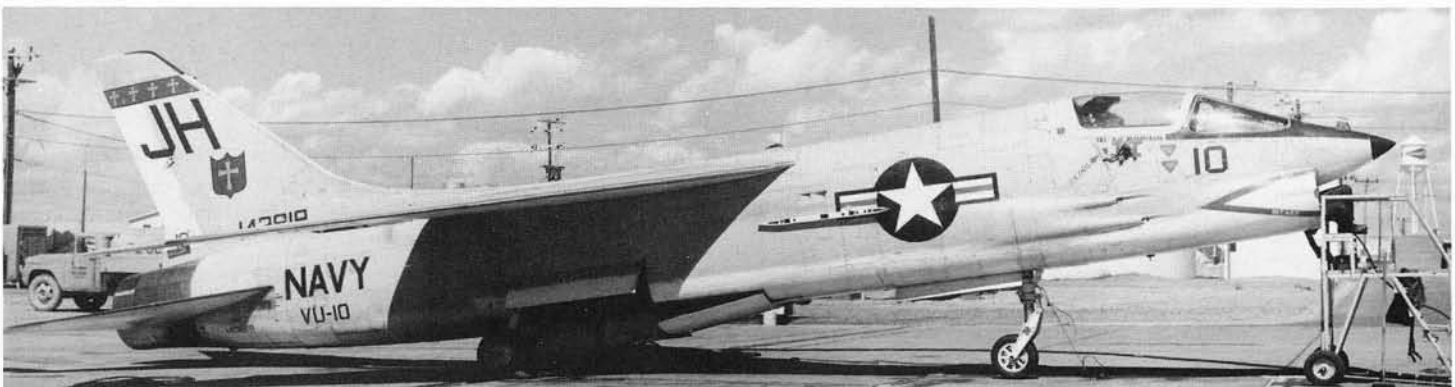


FLEET UTILITY SQUADRON TEN, VU-10 PROUD PELICANS



Fleet Utility Squadron Ten was originally commissioned as VJ-16 on 1 December 1943. Over the years the squadron has supplied service aircraft for Fleet training in the Caribbean area. Stationed at NAS Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the squadron was redesignated VU-10 on 15 November 1946. The F8U-1 (F-8A) Crusader was acquired in January 1962. UTRON TEN was redesignated Fleet Composite Squadron Ten (VC-10) on 1 July 1965.

UTRON TEN F8U-1 143756 in flight over Leeward Point Field, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on 2-6-62. The fence line passing under the aircraft is the Cuban fence. The U.S. fence (not shown) is well within the Cuban boundaries and only three-fourths of a mile from the touchdown point on Leeward's 8,000 foot runway. Pilots were expected to turn within the U.S. fence-line on approach. (USN) VU-10 F-8A 143819 at Litchfield Park, Arizona, on 3-18-63. Crusader shield and upper fin stripe were red bordered by blue with gold crosses. (Doug Olson via Clay Jansson)



FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON TEN, VC-10/VCF-10 CHALLENGERS



VC-10 was established when Utility Squadron Ten (VU-10) was redesignated VC-10 on 1 July 1965. Fleet Composite Squadron Ten remains permanently based ashore at NAS Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. During the F-8 years the squadron had a threefold mission and was assigned two distinctly different types of aircraft to complete these missions.

One of the Challenger's missions was to provide service aircraft for Fleet Training Group GTMO, to help train the crews of ships undergoing training in the Caribbean area. Another primary mission was to provide Commander Naval Base Guantanamo with a ready defense force of both airborne attack configured aircraft and trained ground defense personnel. The third mission was unique to GTMO and VC-10. Since VC-10 was the only squadron assigned to GTMO and that the base is located in a Communist controlled country, the squadron was required to provide alert fighters

in support of CINCLANT reconnaissance operations in the Eastern Cuban region.

Fighter alert requirements demanded that four F-8 aircraft were assigned at various times to the operational control of Commander Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay. Two of these aircraft were normally in at least condition five 24 hours a day. Two additional aircraft were assigned as necessary to support the special operations. The fighter alert conditions prescribed required combat loaded aircraft as follows:

CONDITION ONE. Two aircraft airborne within 2 minutes.

CONDITION TWO. Two aircraft airborne within 5 minutes.

CONDITION THREE. Two aircraft airborne within 15 minutes.

CONDITION FOUR. Two aircraft airborne within 30 minutes.

CONDITION FIVE. Two aircraft airborne within 60 minutes.

In 1966 the squadron flew ap-

proximately 200 hours a year on actual or practice alert scrambles. In addition, alert birds averaged 335 hours per month in Condition three or above alert postures (50% of the time). The squadron would also launch combat loaded fighters to escort VIPs arriving aboard military aircraft.

In February 1966, FLECOMPRON TEN transferred the last of its F-8B aircraft and became fully equipped with the F-8D and the US-2C. The Challengers were also awarded the CNO Safety Award for 1966.

The F-8Ds were replaced in 1968 with F-8Cs and the "C" model was in turn replaced by F-8Ks in 1969. The F-8 Crusader was retired from VC-10 in 1974.

VC-10 F-8D 147924 at Cecil on 5-25-67. Tail stripe was red bordered by black with white crosses. Shield colors are unknown. (Clay Jansson)





VC-10 F-8C 147028 with a black Crusader shield bordered by red on the tail in 1968. (Vought) VC-10 1973 squadron photo. Notice most of the pilots were wearing ball caps with the unofficial squadron designation of VCF-10, which denoted the squadron's special Air Defense Mission. (Ted Goldstone)

Periodically VCF-10 would conduct a exercise called DEFEX. In this exercise the squadron was tasked with attacking NAS GTMO. As Ted Goldstone relates, it amounted to legalized flathatting. Where else could you roll-in and bomb the BOQ and then return at 550 kts. to strafe the GEDUNK!

VC-10 Alert Bird armed with four Sidewinders and having the wing pylons installed, stands ready with steps extended and canopy open. "LTJG TED GOLDSTONE" is painted below the canopy.



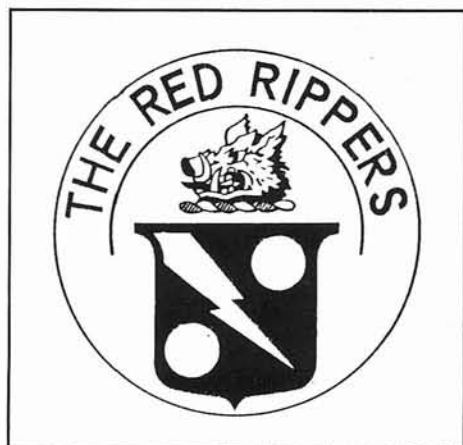


VC-10 F-8K 146968 at the Bradley Air Museum, Windsor Locks, Connecticut, on 15 August 1975. The name under the canopy is ENS LARRY HENDERSON. (Norm Taylor Collection) VCF-10 F-8Ks 145549 (#9), 147029 (#4), 145566 (#8), and 147010 (#6) in flight in 1974. Markings on the tail were a small black Griffin followed by a red-white-blue fin flash. The ventral fin started forward with red followed by white and blue. The wing stripes were red and blue (no white). Note that the top two Crusaders have VCF-10 painted on their fuselage. (Goldstone)

In the summer of 1974, VCF-10 had a pilot swipe the Crusader sword from VFP-63 and mail it to Homestead AFB. After a suitable wait to allow VFP-63 to go nuts looking for it, a ransom was agreed to. Dick Reditt, the VFP-63 pilot holding the real Crusader sword flew to Holmstead AFB with a load of target paint which had been swiped from VC-7. When the VFP-63 pilot first landed, LTJG Ted Goldstone (at left) and LT Bill Steiger (at right) tried to trade the wooden F-8K CRUSADER'S FOREVER sword for the paint.



FIGHTER SQUADRON ELEVEN, VF-11 RED RIPPERS



Today's Red Rippers came into being on 16 February 1959 at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, when VF-43 was redesignated VF-11 (see VF-43). The previous VF-11 had been decommissioned on 15 February 1959. Upon being redesignated VF-11, VF-43 opted to carry on the traditions and insignia of the original VF-11 which dated back to 1 February 1927.

On 27 April 1959 VF-11 joined Air Group Seven (CVG-7) during the shakedown cruise of the USS Independence (CVA-62). CDR Skidmore, the squadron CO, made the first Crusader landing aboard the new carrier. The shakedown period lasted until 29 June 1959 with the squadron returning to Cecil that evening. Eighteen pilots became carrier qualified in the F-8 during this at-sea period.

The squadron's second at-sea period came on 29 September 1959 and lasted until 7 October on what was to become the Red Rippers' home carrier, the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt (CVA-42). The squadron was assigned to Carrier Air Group One (CVG-1) and participated in operation LANTFLEX 3-59 in the role of day fighter, CAP, and interceptor. While at Cecil on 13 October, eleven squadron pilots received Broadcast Control Intercept (BCI) "E" awards, including the new CO, CDR Prichard.

January 1960 saw VF-11 depart aboard CVA-42 for the squadrons first cruise. This MED cruise lasted until 24 August 1960. During this deployment



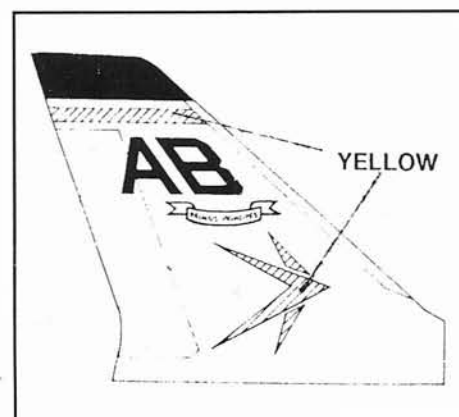
the squadron received a rating of outstanding for its ORI inspection. The Red Rippers took part in many operations which included close air support of Task Force 61 during the amphibious landings on Northern Libya on 4-5 April 1960. Combat Air Patrol for operations Haystrike (8-9 April), Rejex I (6-7 May), Rejex II (9-10 May), Royal Flush (14-17 June), and Purple Sage (18-19 July) were also conducted during this cruise.

The squadron conducted weapons training at NAS Leeward Point, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, from 1 November until 17 November 1960. During this temporary deployment the Rippers third CO, CDR J. Arnold Jr. became the first F-8 pilot to fire a 48.8% in 20,000 foot gunnery.

The second F.D.R. deployment started on 15 February 1961. On the 23rd, VF-11 became shore based at Naval Station Rota, Spain. This assignment lasted until 17 August when the Red Rippers boarded the F.D.R. once more for the return trip to Florida, which ended on 28 August 1961.

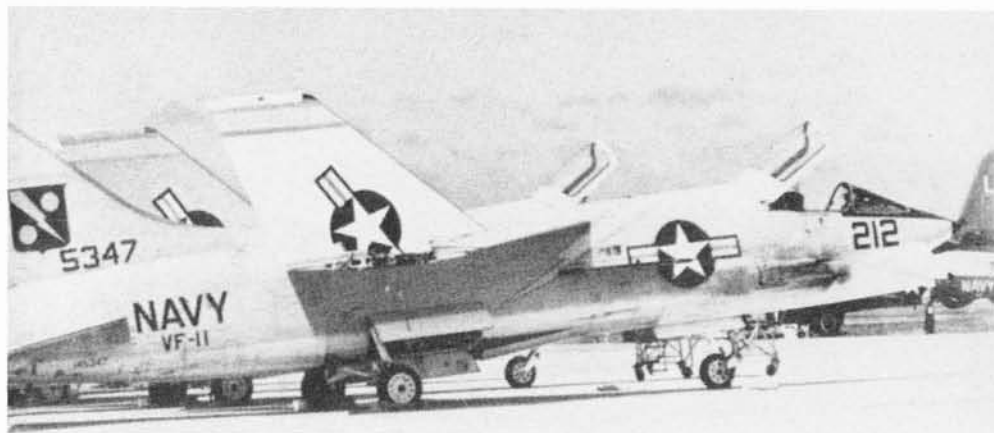
Car-quals were conducted on CVA-42 from 16 to 22 October 1961. During these carquals LTJG Kryway lost his F8U-1 during a spectacular fiery ditching caused by a broken wheel strut. Carquals took place again from 13 to 18 November. On Saturday, 18 November, VF-11 was off loaded and flown back to Cecil. All of VF-11's gear had been loaded on vans, transported to Cecil, and stowed, and most per-

VF-11 F8U-1 143709 launching off the USS F. D. Roosevelt in the MED on 3-10-60. The wing tip and upper fin stripe and the tail flashes were yellow. The Sidewinder's body was blue and the stenciling square is red. (USN)

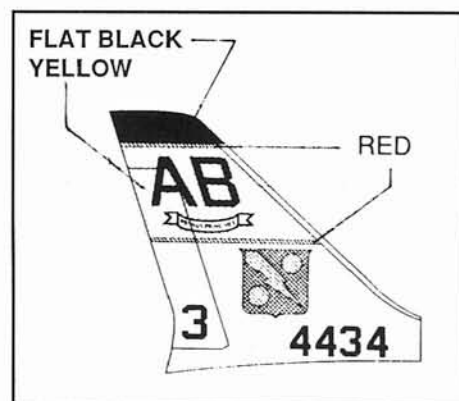


sonnel had left for liberty. Two hours later CAG-1 was alerted and ordered back aboard at once for a classified special mission. Within four hours all aircraft and gear and 95% of the personnel were aboard for the emergency cruise which lasted until 30 November 1961.

On 5 February 1962, four Red Rippers, LCDR J. C. Dixon Jr., LT A. J. Hedberg, LT J. D. Davis and CAPT J. H. Bennett USAF, made arrested landings aboard the USS Enterprise (CVN-65). Then on 8 February VF-11 became the first AIRLANT squadron to receive the all-weather F8U-2NE (F-8E). The new "E" model was car-qualed aboard the USS Forrestal (CVA-59) in late March, during which time VF-11 became the first squadron



VF-11 F8U-1 145347 at Naval Station Rota, Spain, during the 1961 FDR cruise. The fuselage lightning bolt, wing tip stripe and wide vertical fin stripe is yellow bordered by red. (USN)



VF-11 F8U-1 being started at Rota, Spain. Note the Gordons Gin boars head insignia has been added to the fuselage. (USN)

to land an aircraft during its first operational flight on board an aircraft carrier. F8U-2NE BUNO 149161 was ferried from Vought Dallas to VF-11 at Cecil Field, given a test hop and with less than three hours in its log book was landed aboard CVA-59.

From February until deploying to the MED on 14 September 1962, VF-11 was primarily engaged in radar intercept training in the new F8U-2NE (F-8E). Four short ship-air cruises were conducted from April until September, with the 20 April until 18 May 1962 cruise also being a orientation cruise for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

VF-11's third deployment aboard the FDR was from 14 September 1962 until 20 April 1963. After returning

from the MED the squadron entered on an intensive training program involving air-to-air and air-to-ground gunnery. This training schedule was broken by deployments and detachments being used to cover the crises in Haiti and Cuba. From 12 August 1963 until January 1964 VF-11 maintained a detachment of six aircraft at NAS Key West, Florida, to participate in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

In preparation for a fourth FDR deployment, car-quals were conducted from 22 January until 8 March 1964. The Red Rippers and the FDR left for the MED on 24 April and returned on 23 December 1964. A fifth deployment was conducted in 1965 which ended in December. The success of this accident-free cruise aided

the squadron in winning the CNO Safety Award.

In January 1966 the squadron's 13 F-8Es were swapped-out for 9 F-8Ds to be used prior to converting to the new McDonnell F-4B Phantom. From 21 January until 11 February 1966, VF-11 F-8Ds participated in Operation Springboard. Then from 1 April through 30 April a six plane detachment was sent to NAS Key West for "HOT PAD" duty. Four planes were also sent to British Guiana from 22 May through 27 May to represent the US during their Independence Day.

In early July 1966 the F-8Ds were transferred out and VF-11 was transferred to NAS Oceana where it would receive the F-4B and join CVW-17.



The F-4B was replaced by the F-4J in 1973 and was in turn replaced by the F-14A in the summer of 1980. With Tomcats came assignment to the USS John F. Kennedy (CV-67) and CVW-3. Then on 1 April 1985 the Red Rippers were reassigned to CVW-6 and the USS Independence (CV-62).

VF-11 F8U-1 145357 piloted by LTJG John T. Kryway brakes away from the arresting gear with a fiery broken wheel strut on board the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt (CVA-42) on 10-21-61. The pilot ejects as the F-8 leaves the deck. The shield below the wide yellow tail stripe was blue with a red lightning bolt and two red balls. (USN)





F8U-2NE (F-8E) 149161 in VF-11's third color scheme. A scroll with the Air Wing's moto PRIMUS PRINCIPES was added to the tail. Tail stripe is yellow bordered by blue. The ventral fin was blue with a red lightning bolt. (Collect-Air) F-8E 150330 in the same markings. (Buchanan via Menard) F-8E 149170 and 150692 fly over the FDR on 11-8-65. (USN)



COMPOSITE SQUADRON THIRTEEN, VC-13 FIGHTIN' SAINTS



Composite Squadron Thirteen was commissioned in August 1973 with the aircraft and personnel from the decommissioned VSF-76 and VSF-86 (see VSF-76 & VSF-86). The NAS New Orleans-based squadron's primary mission was to provide Dissimilar Air Combat Training (DACT) to the fleet. Originally flying the F-8H Crusader, the squadron transitioned to the A-4L Skyhawk in 1974 and transferred its duty station to NAS Miramar, California, in 1976. Today the squadron's primary aircraft is still

the A-4, although many different models are used for their DACT mission including the F-16N Falcon. In October 1988 VC-13's designation was changed to VFC-13.

F-8H 148703 on 10-17-73 at NAS New Orleans with black and white rudder and VSF-76's "AW" tail letters painted out. (Fred Roos) F-8H 148692 in October 1973 in full VC-13 markings. Aircraft number 07 has been added to the nose and the squadron's new "UX" tail letters are also added. The 07 and UX are shaded in black. (J. H. Weathers)



FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE THREE, VF-13 NIGHT CAPPERS



VF-13 was commissioned in September 1948 by taking personnel and aircraft from two other squadrons in Carrier Air Group One. These two squadrons were VF-11 and VF-12 whose insignias were incorporated into VF-13's insignia.

Based at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, VF-13 began transitioning from F9F-8 Cougars to F4D-1 Skyrays in January and February 1959. The Skyrays were flown until September 1962, when the venerable Ford was replaced by the F3H Demon. The Demons took part in the blockade of Cuba and were replaced by the F-8E Crusader on 2 July 1964. Fighting Thirteen had been the last operational Demon squadron in AIRLANT.

Early October saw VF-13 and

their new F-8E Crusaders, in Key West, Florida, standing alert duty and preparing for a two week Caribbean cruise aboard the USS Shangri-La (CVA-38) in November. After returning to Cecil, Fighting Thirteen embarked on a rigorous weapons training program and increased night flying in preparation for the spring and summer Mediterranean cruise. In January, the squadron was aboard the Shang for a carrier refresher period with Air Wing Ten.

On 10 February 1965 VF-13 deployed aboard CVA-38 for its first Mediterranean cruise. Stopping in the Caribbean on 15 February for a combined Shangri-La-Air Wing Ten ORI, they sailed for the MED on 1 April. On 14 June eight of the squadron's F-8E Crusaders participated in the Paris International Air Show at Le Bourget Field. VF-13's first cruise ended on 20 September 1965.

After returning from the MED the Shang departed for a yard period. When the Shang returned, VF-13 as part of Air Wing Eight embarked for a six week cruise to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on 20 June 1966. The squadron's pilots practiced refresher carrier landings while staging from NAS Leeward Point.

Upon return to Cecil on 29 July 1966, Fighting Thirteen began a rapid

transition to F-8D aircraft. This evolution was completed in time to embark in the Shangri-La on 29 August 1966 for a two week operating period off the Florida coast. Returning on 12 September, the squadron busied itself with last minute preparations for the squadron's second MED cruise which began on 29 September 1966.

The Atlantic transit was utilized by the squadron to increase readiness through training. Upon arrival off Rota, Spain, air operations began. On 12 October 1966 the Shang relieved the USS Saratoga (CVA-60). Four days later an accident on the flight deck precluded further air operations. CVA-38 required repairs that took two weeks to complete at Naples, Italy. During November the ship visited Valletta, Malta and Istanbul, Turkey. December 1966 operations were curtailed somewhat by weather and the long period spent in Athens, Greece for Christmas. During December the men of VF-13 were among those who searched in vain for survivors of the Greek ferry boat Heraklion. VF-13 returned home on 20 May 1967.

From that time until the squadron VF-13 F-8E in 1965 with the squadron's insignia under the wing. The name "CDR R. S. Cooke" is painted under the canopy as well as a champagne glass with Night Cappers written above it. (USN via Barry Miller)



once again left for the MED it was transitioning from the F-8D to the F-8C model. A total of seven F-8Cs were modified with a "hard point" wing, enabling the aircraft to carry conventional stores.

On 15 July 1967 a detachment left for NAS Key West and Combat Air Patrol for a period of two months. Then on 4 August, the squadron moved aboard the Shang for approximately one month of intensive training

off the coast of Cuba. Another two week refresher cruise took place on 25 September, during which Air Wing Eight hosted the American Ordnance Association for a fire power demonstration. VF-13 fired Zuni rockets, Sidewinder Missiles and 20 millimeter cannon.

From 15 November 1967 to 1 January 1968, the squadron was deployed with CVA-38, in-chopping into the Sixth Fleet on 22 November. From

6-10 December, the squadron participated in PHLIBEX 10-67, in coordination with the Marine Amphibious Landing Force, providing close air support. Since that time, normal at-sea operations were conducted, with port-of-calls being made at Valletta, Malta and Naples, Italy.

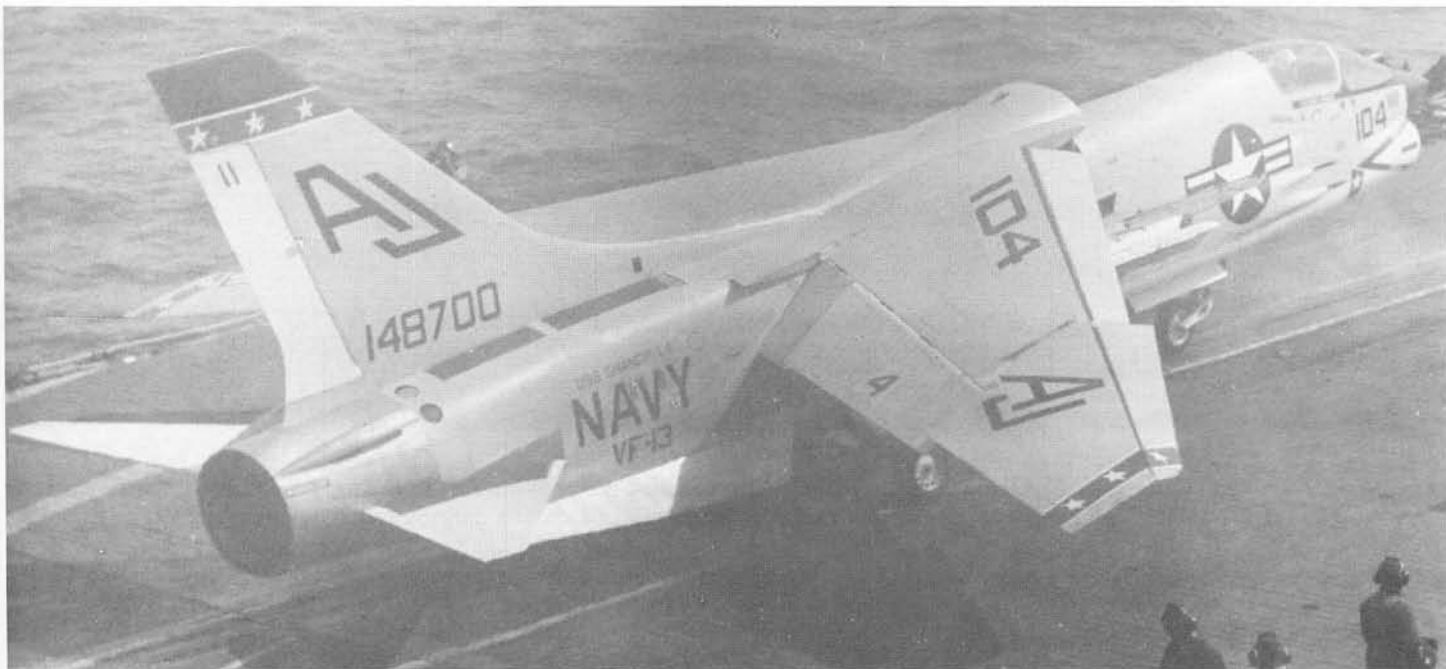
One last MED cruise was conducted from 1 January until 1 July 1969 by VF-13 in F-8Hs. VF-13 was disestablished on 1 October 1969.



VF-13 F-8E 150348 armed with the F-8's unique twin Zuni launchers mounted on the "Y" fuselage racks in 1965. The wide tail and narrow wing stripes are believed to be red. (Tailhook Photo Service, VF-03725)

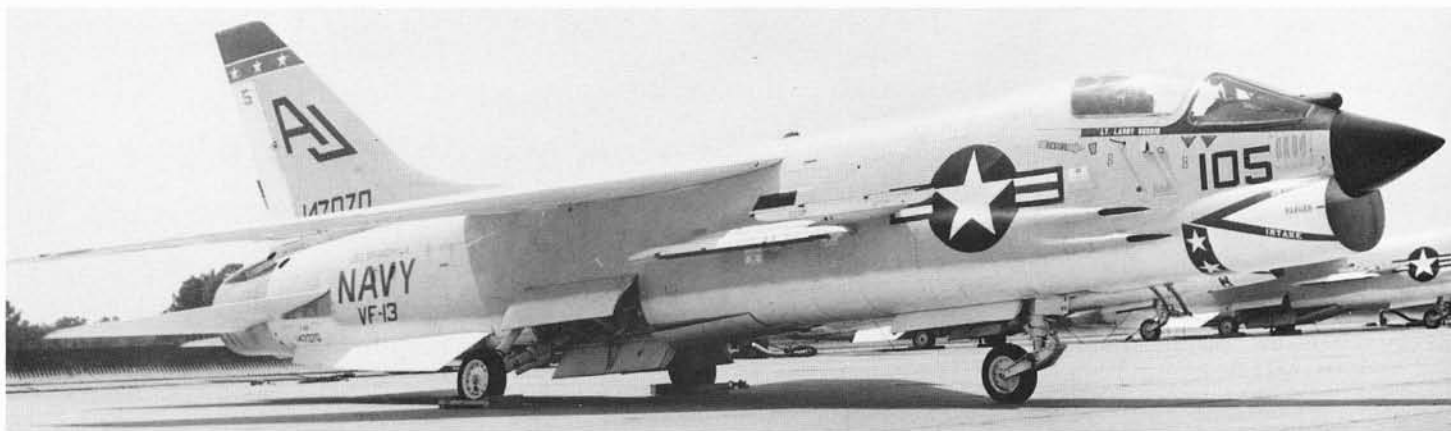
VF-13 F-8E 150846 on 2-19-66 in new color scheme, but still with CVW-10's "AK" tail code. Tail and wing stripes are red with white stars, radome is tan and fin tip is black. (Clay Jansson)



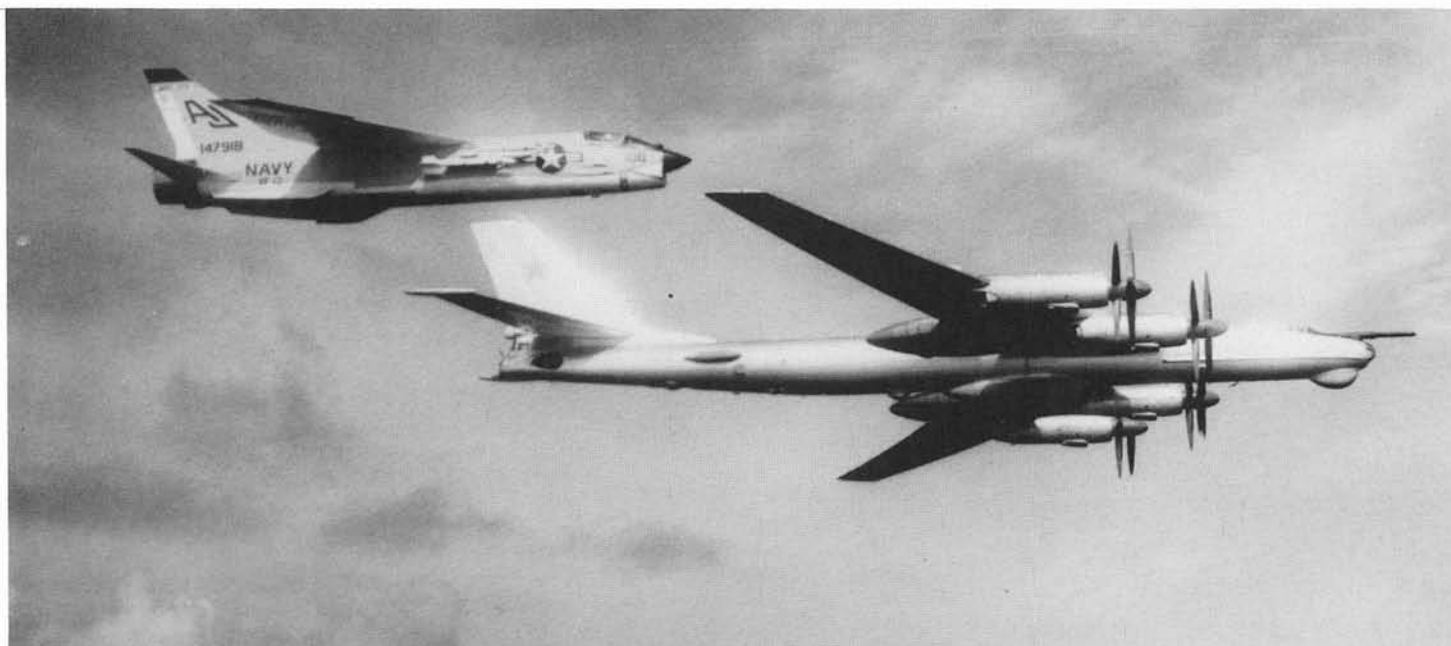


VF-13 F-8D 148700 with red wing, forward fuselage and tail stripes bordered by white in 1966 while on board the Shangri-La. The aircraft carries the "AJ" CVW-8 code. Note the raised wing and the open auxiliary air intake doors. (Kasulka via Jansson) 147918 on CVA-38 in 1966. (Candid Aero-Files) FI-TRON THIRTEEN F-8D prepares to launch from the Shangri-La (USN via Barry Miller)



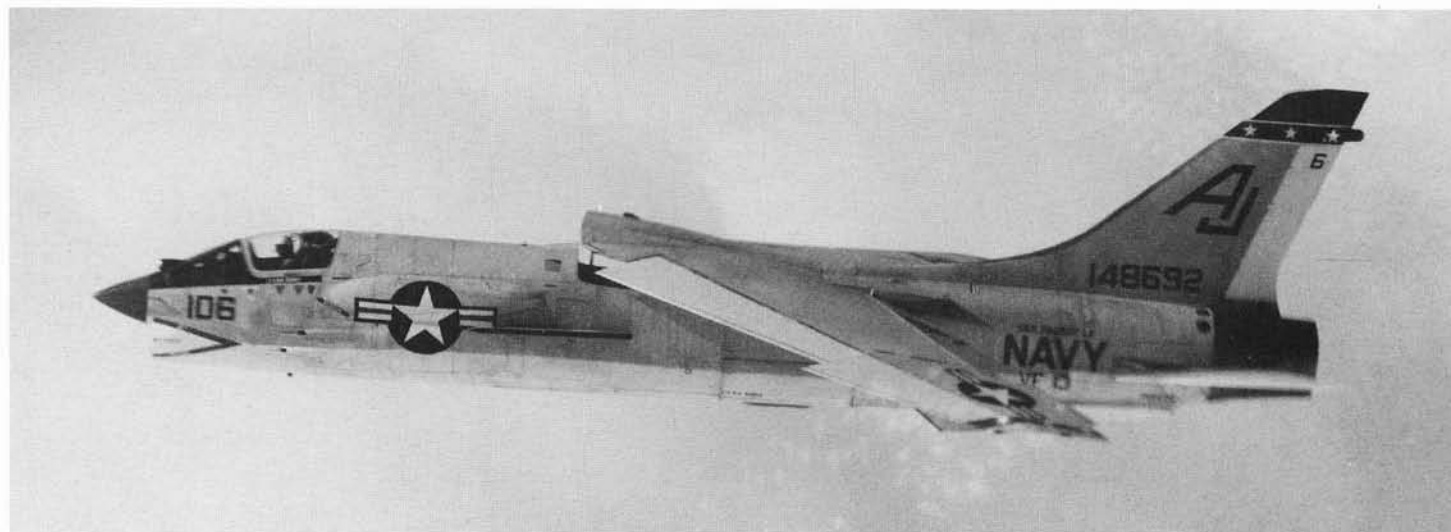


VF-13 F-8D 147070 at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, on 5-25-67. The stars on the red nose and tail stripe are white and the wording USS SHANGRI-LA is red. "LT LARRY DURBIN" is painted below the canopy rail. (Clay Jansson)



VF-13 F-8D 147918 escorts a Soviet TU-95 Bear over the Mediterranean while armed with four Sidewinders during the 1967 CVA-38 MED cruise. (USN)

VF-13 F-8H 148692 from the USS Shangri-La in February 1969. Note the wing is raised while in level flight and at altitude. (USN)



FIGHTER SQUADRON TWENTY FOUR, VF-24 CHECKERTAILS



VF-24 Checkertail pilot shows the results of applying too much back pressure too fast while taking a wave-off during one of the squadron's Midway deployments. (via Art Schoeni)



VF-24 was originally commissioned as VF-211 in June 1955 at NAS Moffett Field, California. Assigned to CVG-21 and flying FJ-3 Furys, VF-211 deployed aboard the USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) in August 1956.

After the Checkertails returned from their WESTPAC cruise, transition to the F8U-1 (F-8A) Crusader took place. The new supersonic Crusaders deployed aboard the USS Midway (CVA-41) in August 1958.

On 9 March 1959, VF-211 was reassigned to CVG-2 and was redesignated VF-24. The squadron deployed aboard Midway again from August 1959 until March 1960. Upon

returning to Moffett Field, VF-24 commenced transition to the F8U-2 (F-8C) Crusader. The Checkertails took their new F8U-2s to sea from February 1961 until September 1961. Upon return to CONUS, VF-24's new home was NAS Miramar. Two more peacetime cruises were conducted aboard Midway, one in 1962 and one in 1963-64.

The squadron was briefly redesignated VF-214 from 1 until 17 September 1964 (see VF-214).

The start of our expanded involvement in Vietnam brought a reassignment to CVW-21 and the USS Hancock (CVA-19). VF-24 along with VF-211 put to sea aboard "Hana" on 10-21-64 on the first of what was to be eight combat cruises, seven aboard Hancock and one aboard the Bon Homme Richard. The first Vietnam cruise saw the Checkertails taking part in operation Flaming Dart, a series of reprisal strikes against Dong Hoi, on 7 February 1965. This was followed by participation in early Rolling Thunder missions, with the squadron returning to CONUS in May 1965.

The War necessitated a quick turn-around and VF-24 saw itself back in the Tonkin Gulf by November 1965.

VF-24 F8U-1s 145388 (#112) and 145326 (#101) in flight. Notice location of wing codes and red and white checkerboard stripe on the tails. (USN via Barry Miller)



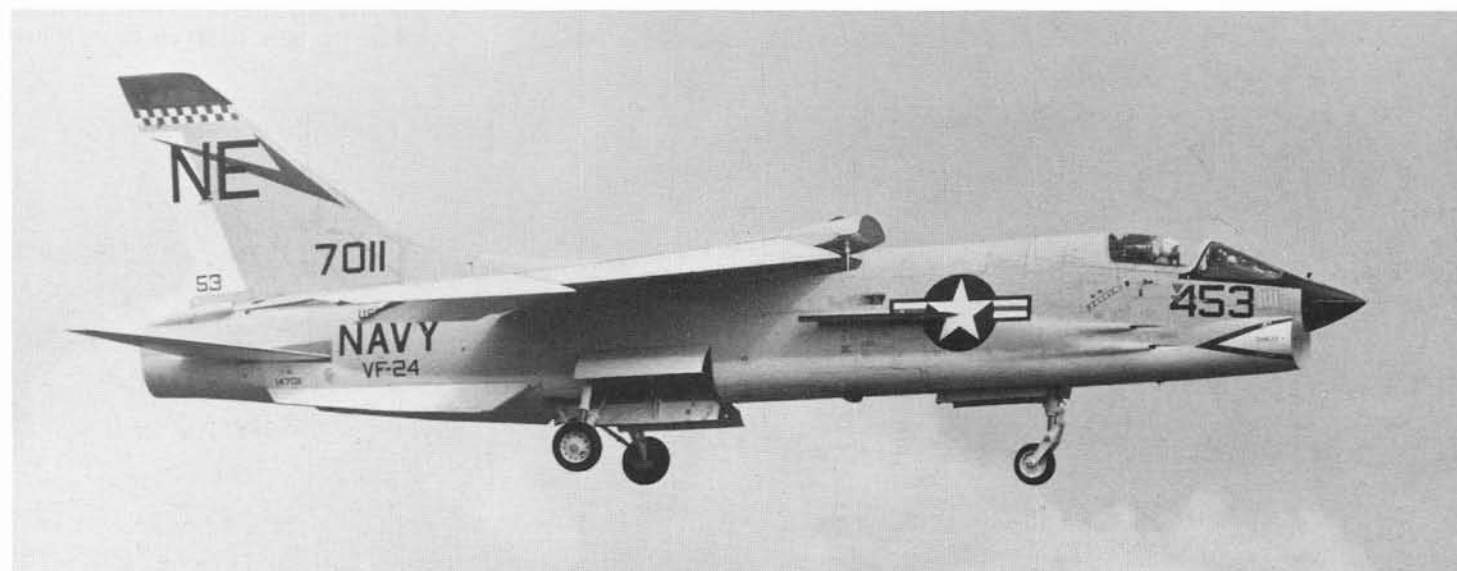


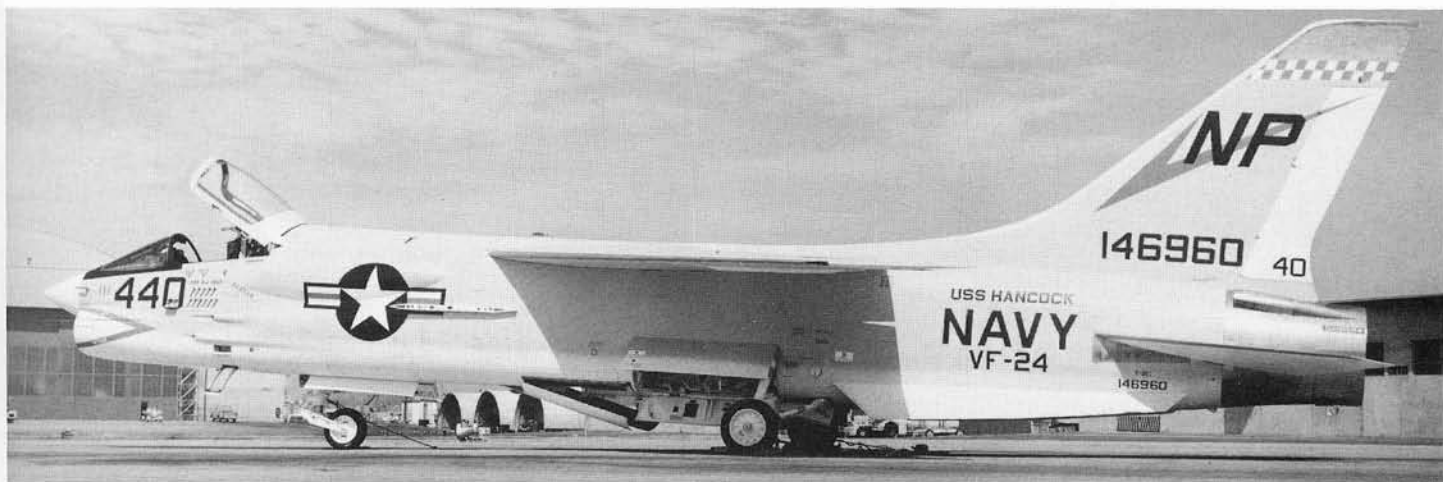
CHECKERTAIL F-8Cs FROM THE USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) DURING 1963 AND 1964

VF-24 F-8C 147020 at Miramar after returning from the 1962 WESTPAC cruise. A red checkmark has been added to the tail and the aircraft shows the effects of salt water corrosion. (1-19-63 by Clay Jansson)

For the 1963-64 cruise, VF-24's modex was changed from the 100 series to the 400 series as seen on 1-15-64 as F-8Cs 147015 (#452), 147000 (#457), 147710 (#454), and 146919 (#460) fly in formation. (USN via S. Nicolau)

VF-24 F-8C 147011 landing at NAS Atsugi on 30 March 1964, with CVW-2's "NE" tail code. (T. Matsuzaki)





This deployment, which lasted until August 1966, saw VF-24 being overshadowed by its sister squadron VF-211 who had scored four victories over North Vietnamese MiGs. During the next War cruise, 26 January 1967 until 25 August 1967, aboard the USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) VF-24 would draw blood. On 19 May LCDR Bobby Lee and LT

Phillip Wood each bagged a MiG-17 with AIM-9D Sidewinders. This performance was repeated on 21 July 1967 when LCDR Marion (Red) Isaacks and LCDR Robert Kirkwood each downed a MiG-17 and LTJG Phil Dempewolf was credited with a probable.

LCDRs Isaacks and Kirkwood re-

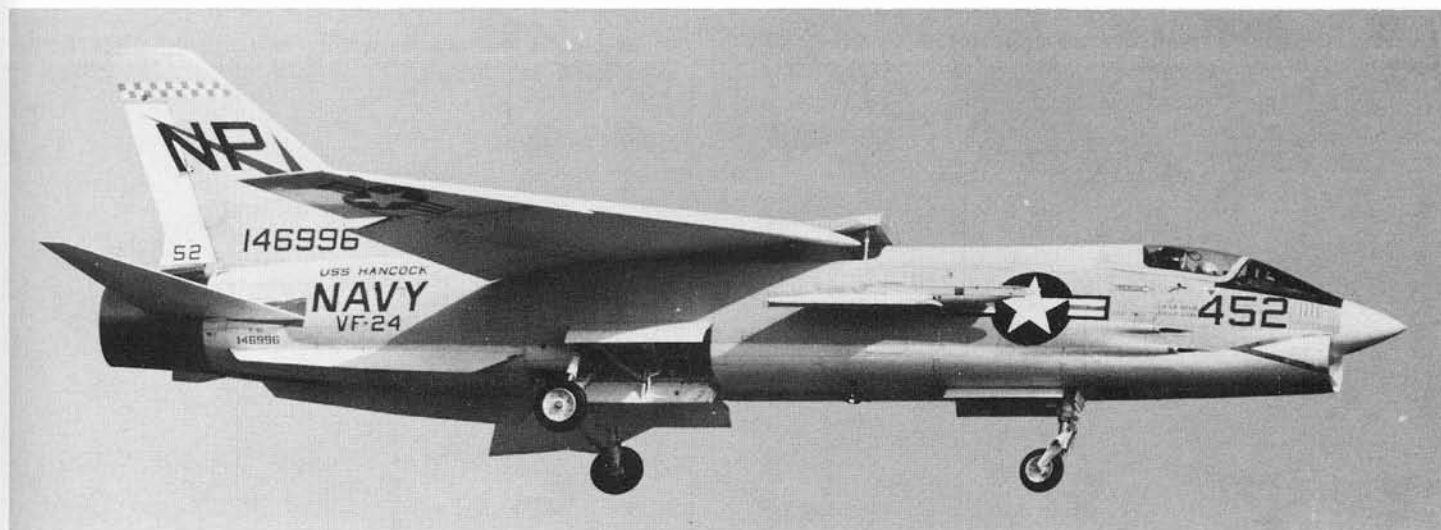
ceived Silver Star Medals in December 1967 for the air actions that resulted in the downing of the two MiGs.

VF-24 F-8C 146960 at Miramar on 8-7-65 after completion of the 1964-65 cruise. There were eleven Zuni ground attack mission hash marks and the name CDR H. J. Post under the canopy. (Swisher)



VF-24 F-8Cs 146997 (#451), 146990 (#447), 146960 (#446), and 147009 (#441) each loaded with eight Zunis over the Tonkin Gulf in 1966. (Bowers via Pace)

VF-24 F-8C 146996 while landing at NAS Atsugi On 2-1-66. The checkerboard tail stripe was red and white and the checkmark on the tail was red. (T. Matsuzak)





VF-24 F-8C 147029 from CVA-31 in 1967 in the South China Sea. (Candid Aero-Files) VF-24 F-8C 146919 on CVA-31 in the Tonkin Gulf during 1967. (G. Bragg via Jim Burrridge)

LCDR Isaack's citation described his action as flight leader of four F-8s protecting a strike group attacked by eight MiG-17s while on a mission against the Ta Xa oil storage area 20 miles from Haiphong.

In the ensuing battle, LCDR Isaacks fired two Sidewinder missiles

at one MiG-17, which caused them to cease their attack on the strike group and turn to meet the F-8s. Outmaneuvering two MiGs, he shot one down with a Sidewinder while under fire from two other enemy aircraft within gun range. His plane was hit several times but he outmaneuvered his adversaries and, although his Crusader

was on fire, reversed his turn to reengage the remaining MiGs, whose pilots were then running for home. He then rejoined the strike group, which had reached its targets, dropped its bombs with good results, and was headed back to the coast. Although his aircraft was on fire during the entire 30 minute flight over hostile enemy



VF-24 F-8C 146996 on 8-26-67 with new lower checkerboard stripe, four and a half MiG-17 silhouettes on the ventral fin and LT Chip Harris painted below the canopy. (Swisher)

VF-24 MiG Killer F-8C 146992 on 8-26-67. LCDR Bobby Lee and one Russian star denoting the MiG-17 Kill of 19 May were painted below the canopy. (Clay Jansson)





territory and 40 minutes flight over water to the ship, LCDR Isaacks elected to remain with the aircraft and was able to land aboard in spite of imminent danger of control loss or explosion.

LCDR Kirkwood, the second section leader, while providing TARCAP

for 15 A-4s also fired Sidewinders at the eight attacking MiGs, including the one downed by Isaacks. Then he attacked another MiG by maneuvering into position for the kill. He fired a Sidewinder which exploded alongside the MiG causing it to turn right with LCDR Kirkwood close behind. He then charged his guns, closed to 600 feet,

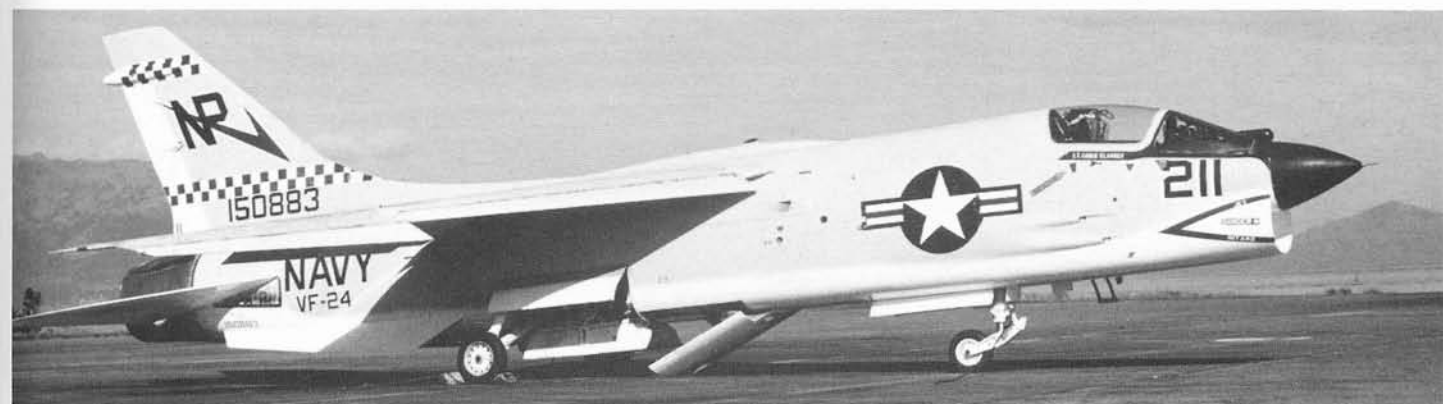
VF-24 F-8H 148648 on 3-19-68 with four MiG-17s on the ventral fin and LCDR BOB KIRKWOOD and one Russian star under the canopy. (Clay Jansson)

and began firing while steadily closing the range on the MiG. This resulted in the MiG catching fire, pitching up, and the pilot ejecting as LCDR Kirkwood passed close aboard.



F-8H 147055 with unusual yellow checkmark on the tail on 7-31-69. (Swisher)

VF-24 F-8J 150883 at NAS Cubi Point in December 1970. LT Chris Clausen is painted under the canopy. (Barry Miller)

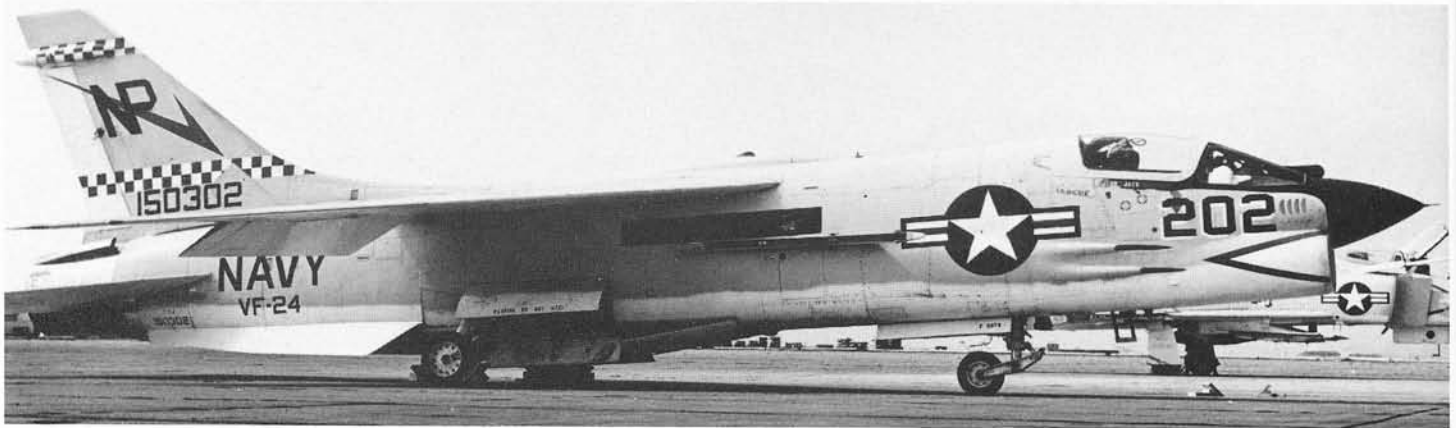




After completing this successful cruise, VF-24 started re-equipping with updated F-8H aircraft. The F-8H was used on the next two cruises aboard CVA-19, the "Fighting Hana". These were from 7-18-68 until 3-3-69 and from 8-2-69 until 4-15-70.

After returning to CONUS in April 1970, the F-8Hs were traded in for F-8Js. Three F-8J cruises aboard the Hancock would be conducted. These were from 1-7-72 until 10-3-72, from 5-8-73 until 1-8-74 and in 1975. VF-24 returned from its last F-8 cruise in Oc-

tober 1975 and started converting to the Grumman F-14A Tomcats. Renamed the Fighting Renegades in 1979, VF-24 continues to fly the F-14.



VF-24 F-8J 150302 after the 1971 cruise. (Fred Roos)

VF-24 F-8J 149201 with new markings for the 1972 cruise. (Jansson)





VF-24 F-8Js in flight, 149201 is the CO's aircraft and carries complete markings; 150932 is in the foreground. The tail markings consist of the VF-24 insignia in red and white with the handle of the sword being yellow. (USN via Barry Miller)



CO lands F-8J 149201 at NAS Atsugi on 8-8-72. A sword was painted below the canopy with the pilot's name, also a drawing of Foghorn Leghorn is aft of the nose number (T. Matsuzaki)



VF-24 F-8J departs the angle deck of the Hancock in Sept. 72. (Barry Miller)



VF-24 F-8J landing on board the Hancock in 1972





VF-24 F-8J 150340 in flight with the black and red tail markings. LCDR Taco Bell (later CO of VFP-63) is painted below the canopy and the coveted "E" is painted aft of the nose number. (USN via Barry Miller)



VF-24 F-8J 150323 at NAS Miramar on 3-16-73 with CDR John Nichols painted below the canopy. Tail markings were a black and red checkerboard stripe with a black rudder with red stars and a red checkmark bordered by black. (Swisher)

VF-24 F-8J 150898 at Nellis AFB in October 1974 with the CO's name, CDR PAUL STEPHENSON, painted below the canopy. Radome was barbered striped black and red and the red stars on the rudder were outlined in white. (Barry Miller)





VF-24 had seven combat losses from 1966 to 1972. The aircraft lost were: F-8Cs 146919, 147027, 146915, 147021, and 147002; F-8H 148648; F-8J 150311. Most were lost

to AAA fire. In addition, eight Crusaders were lost to operational accidents from 1965 to 1972. These were: F-8Cs 147011, 147012, and 147031; F-8Hs 147924, 147897, and 147919;

F-8Js 150336, and 150229.

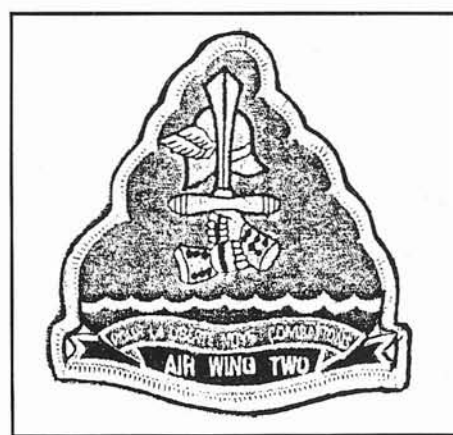
F-8J 149139 on 9-15-74 in the red and black tail markings used on VF-24s last cruise. LT GARY GARLAND is painted below the canopy. (Fred Roos)

FIGHTER SQUADRON TWO SIX, VF-26 SUNDOWNERS



Fighting Twenty-Six came into being on 1 September 1964 when the Sundowners of VF-111 (see VF-111) were redesignated VF-26. The redesignation took place when VF-111 was reassigned to Carrier Air Wing Two (CVW-2). Unlike the permanent switching of designations that took place between VF-24 and VF-211, the Sundowners redesignation only lasted until 17 September 1964.

F-8D 148632 on 9-12-64 in the freshly painted VF-26 markings. (Swisher)



FIGHTER SQUADRON THREE TWO, VF-32 SWORDSMEN



VF-32 was first commissioned as VFB-3 on 1 February 1945. The squadron flew F6F-3 Hellcats from the USS Yorktown (CV-10) during World War II. In 1946 the Grumman F8F-1 Bearcat replaced the F6Fs and the squadron was redesignated VF-4A on 15 November 1946. On 7 August 1948 VF-4A was redesignated VF-32 and re-equipped with Vought F4U-4 Corsairs in preparation for its combat cruise to Korea aboard the USS Leyte Gulf (CV-32) as part of Carrier Air Group three (CVG-3).

The Swordsmen returned from Korea in January 1951 and reported to NAS Sanford, Florida. In 1952 the squadron transferred to NAS Cecil Field, Florida, and became the first Navy squadron to equip with the swept-wing Grumman F9F-6 Cougar. VF-32 flew the Cougar (F9F-6 F9F-8, and F9F-8B) from 1952 through 1956.

On 25 March 1957 the Swordsmen became the Navy's first fleet fighter squadron to receive the F8U-1 (F-8A) Crusader. In February 1958 VF-32 joined the newly commissioned USS Saratoga (CVA-60) for the carrier's first Mediterranean cruise as part of CVG-3. During their first cruise with the Crusader the Swordsmen took part in the Lebanon Crisis by providing air cover for the landing of 1,800 United States Marines at Beirut in July 1958. VF-32 took its Crusaders aboard the "Sara" five more times before transitioning to the McDonnell F-4B Phantom in 1965. These deployments were:

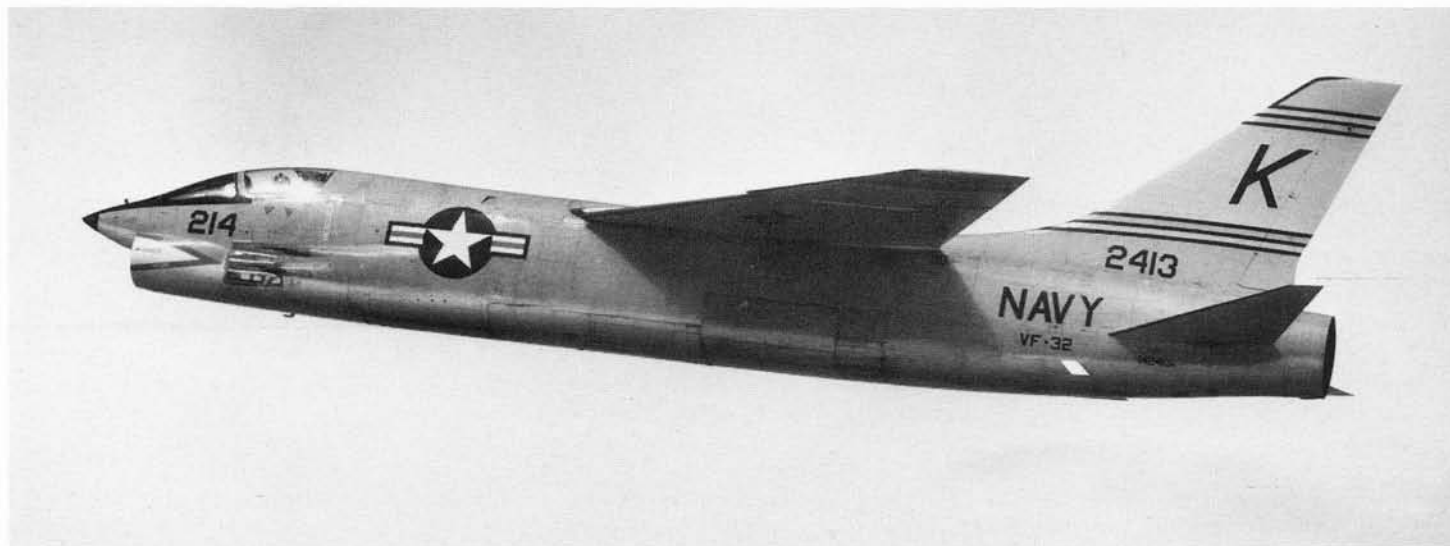
- 1.) 8-15-59 until 2-26-60.
- 2.) 8-22-60 until 2-26-61.
- 3.) 11-28-61 until 5-11-62.
- 4.) 3-29-63 until 10-25-63.
- 5.) 11-28-64 until 7-12-65.

The F8U-1 (F-8A) was replaced

VF-32 F8U-1 142413 on 6-28-57 over Cecil Field. The wide tail stripe was yellow with black stripes and the square area in front of the guns was red. Note yellow and black wing stripes. (National Archives)

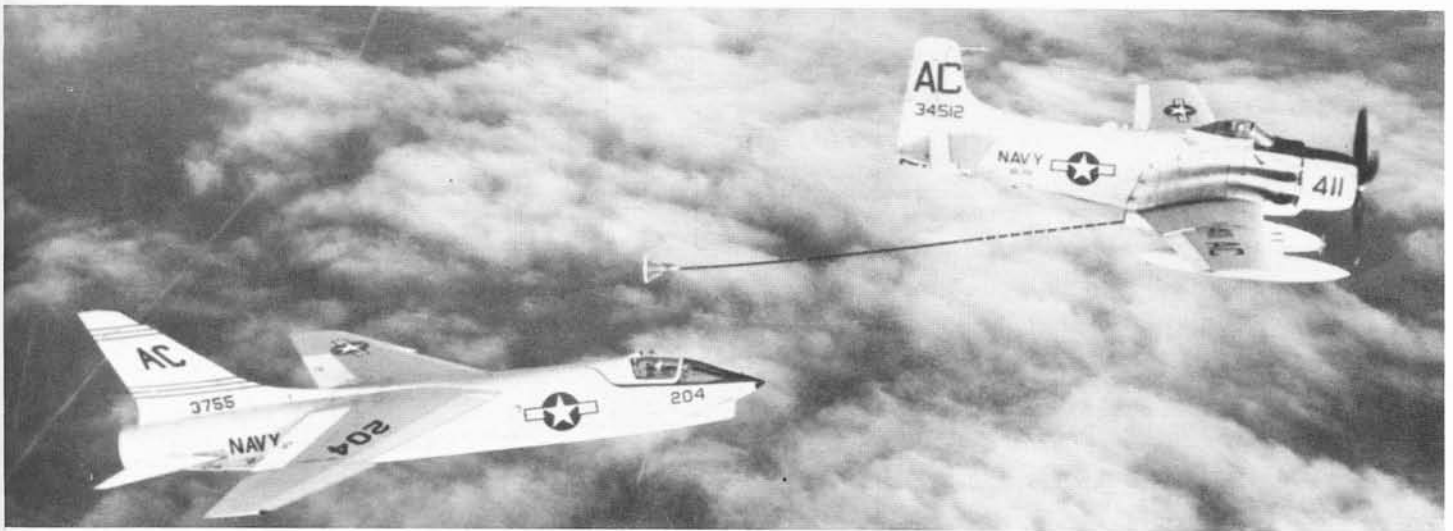
by the F8U-1E (F-8B) in 1959 and the F8U-2N (F-8D) in 1961. While flying the F-8D in August 1962, the Swordsmen were called upon to escort RF-8A photo-recon Crusaders conducting overflights of Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The Swordsmen moved from Cecil Field to Oceana in August 1965 and transitioned to the McDonnell F-4B Phantom for reassignment to CVW-1 and the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt (CVA-42). In early 1974 VF-32 began transition training into the Grumman F-14A Tomcat. The Swordsmen continue to fly the F-14 today.





F8U-1 141361 in late 1956 with CVG-3's single "K" tail code on the yellow tail. The thin tail stripes were black and the black powder stains around the gun ports would indicate recent gunnery practice. (USN via Barry Miller)



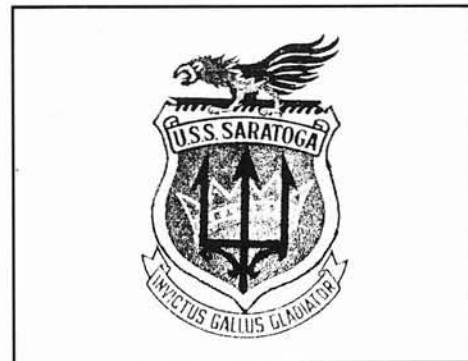
VF-32 F8U-1 143755 with the 1957 "AC" CVG-3 tail code refuels from an AD-6 Skyraider on 11-26-57. The tail colors remained the same, but the area around the canopy was painted yellow bordered by black. Note location of the wing codes. (National Archives)

CAG BIRD, VF-32 F8U-1 143742 aboard Saratoga in early January 1958. The yellow canopy area is very distinct and the thin horizontal tail stripes were yellow bordered in black. Vertical tail stripes were red, yellow, light blue, and orange. (J. C. Fahey via Dave Ostrowski)





VF-32 F8U-1 143747 is being towed past the island on the Saratoga during the squadron's first F-8 cruise in 1958. (via AAHS)

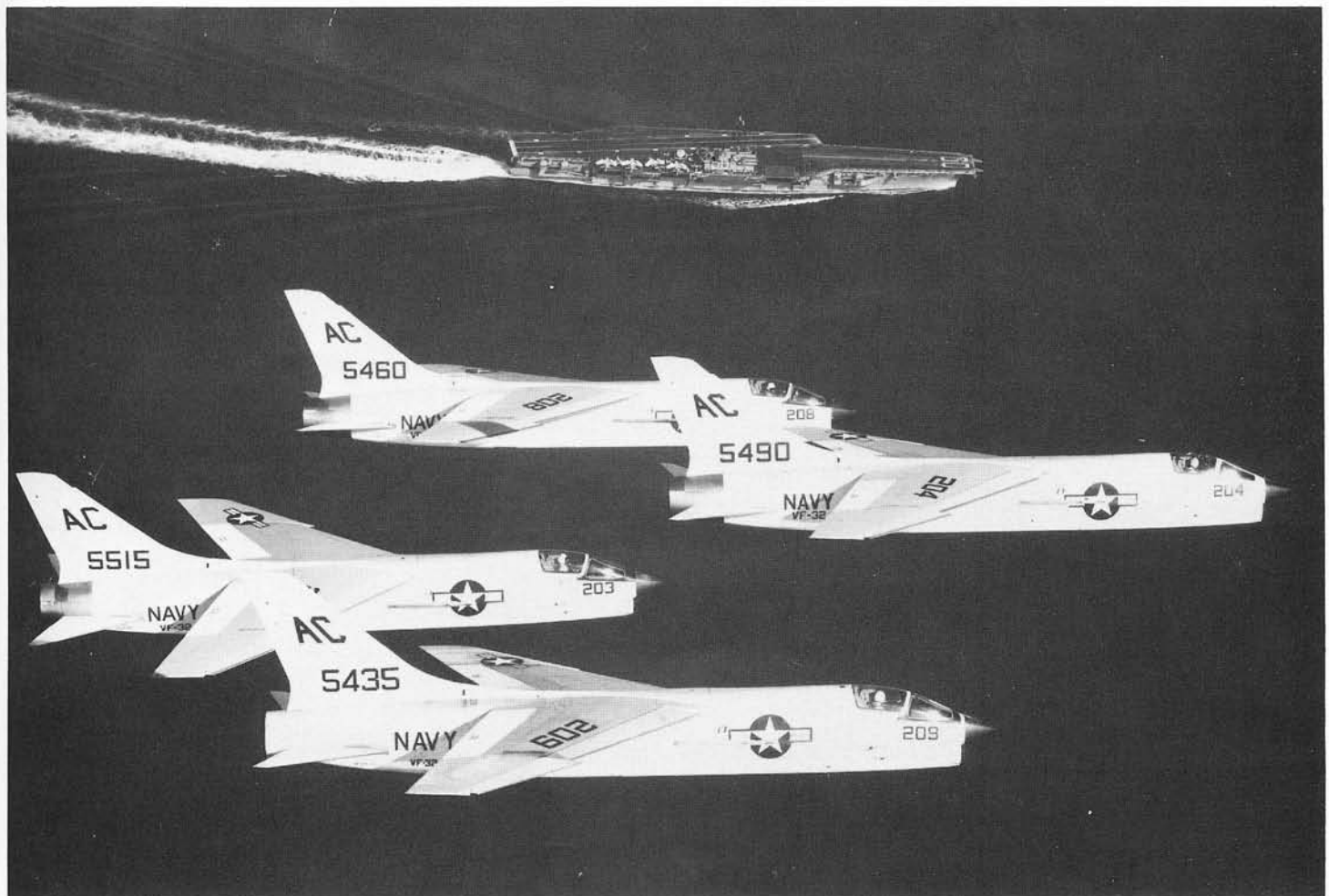


143747 launches from the HMS Ark Royal. (via Burger)
VF-32 flightline on 13 May 1960, with F8U-1E 145417 in the foreground. (USN)





F8U-1Es (F-8Bs) 145460, 145490, 145515, and 145435 in flight over CVA-60 during 1960-61. (USN via Barry Miller)



VF-32 F8U-1E (F-8B) 145482 is being hoisted aboard the USS Saratoga prior to the 1960-61 cruise. 145438 sits on the dock awaiting its turn with the crane. (USN)



VF-32 F8U-1E 145455 touches down on the USS Saratoga with a DELMAR target aft of the wing during 1961. (USN)





VF-32 F-8D 148710 at the Paris Air Show in June 1965. Tail, ventral fin, and upper wing markings were yellow bordered by black. (D. Kasulka via Jansson) DF-8F gate guard 141351 in bogus VF-32 markings. (Interair) F-8A 144427 painted in VF-32 1958 markings. This was a VC-7 DF-8F (see page 32). 1986 photo at the Pima County Air Museum. (Jim Burrridge)



FIGHTER SQUADRON THREE THREE, VF-33 TARSIERs



Fighter Squadron Thirty Three was first commissioned in 1943, flying Grumman F6F Hellcats. The squadron was then decommissioned during the post-war demobilization. VF-33 was recommissioned in October 1948 at NAS Quonset Point, Rhode Island, Flying the F8F Bearcat.

The squadron transitioned to the Chance Vought F4U Corsair and sailed aboard the USS Leyte (CV-32) to Korea. From September 1950 until February 1952, the squadron supported ground operations as part of CVG-3.

VF-33 transitioned to the Grumman F9F Cougar in May 1953 and deployed with CVG-6 aboard the USS Midway (CVA-41). Following their 1954 Mediterranean deployment, VF-33's homeport was changed to NAS Oceana, Virginia, where the squadron transitioned to the North American FJ-3 Fury. In November



1957, VF-33 received the supersonic Grumman F11F-1 Tiger and subsequently deployed to the MED aboard the USS Intrepid (CVA-11). The squadron also took part in the Dominican Republic Crisis in July 1960.

The short-legged but nimble Tigers were replaced by F8U-1E (F-8B) Crusaders, starting in February 1961. VF-33 then deployed their new mounts aboard the Intrepid in August 1961.

1962 brought about an equipment change to the new F8U-2NE (F-8E), as well as assignment to the Navy's first nuclear powered aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise (CVAN-65). As an element of CVW-6 the Tarsiers took part in the Cuban blockade, followed by Mediterranean and World Cruises during 1963 and 1964.

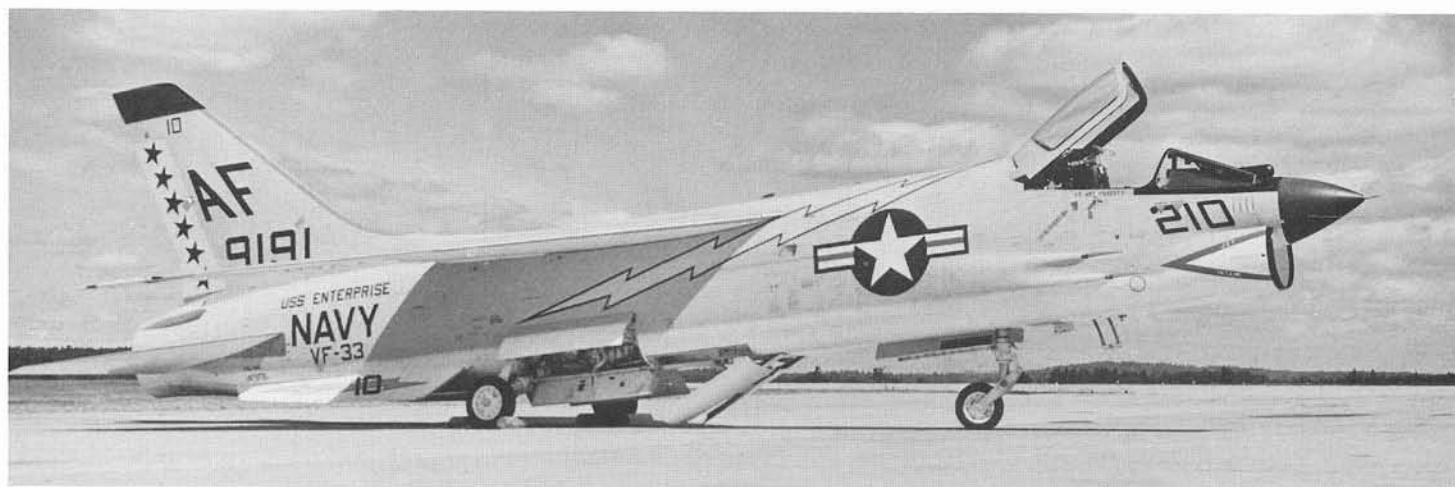
In November 1964, the squadron transitioned to the McDonnell F-4B

VF-33 F8U-1E 145517 on board the Intrepid on 4-6-61. The rudder, wing tips, and lighting bolt were yellow. All the other markings were in black. (Sommerich via Jansson)

Phantom. From 1962 through 1967, VF-33 won five CNO Safety Awards, of which four were consecutive. This set a NAVAIRLANT record.

In September 1967 the F-4Bs were replaced by the newer F-4Js. The squadron then deployed aboard the USS America (CVA-66) to Vietnam as part of CVW-6. In 1969, the Tarsiers were transferred to CVW-7 and the USS Independence (CVA-62). VF-33 continued to fly Phantoms off the Indy until they were replaced by Grumman F-14A Tomcats in July 1981. In early 1988 the squadron changed its name to the Starfighters.

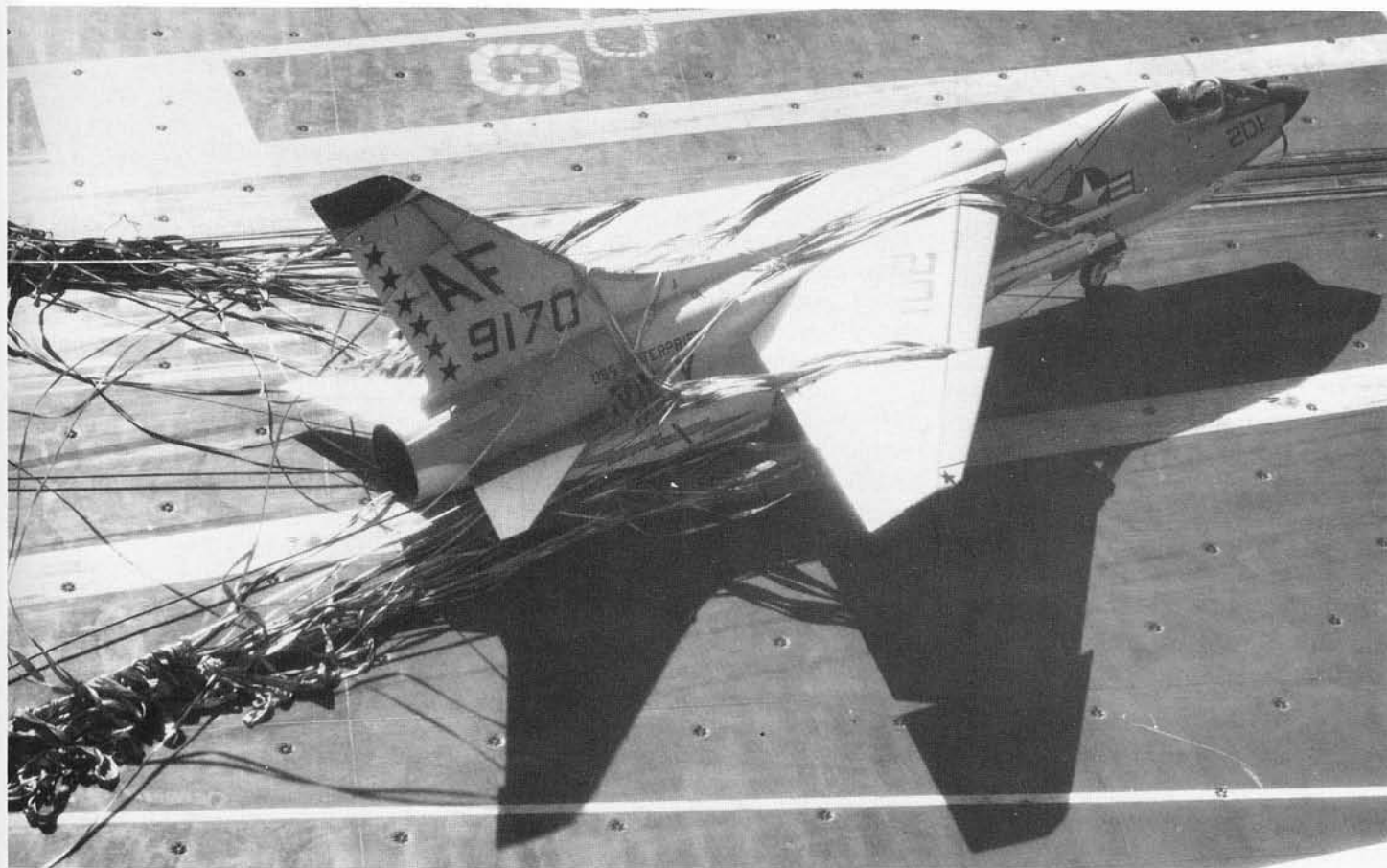
VF-33 F8U-2NE 149191 with ENTERPRISE on the fuselage. The markings are the same as those for the F8U-1E above. (USN via Barry Miller)



VF-33 F8U-1E (F-8B) 145490 from the USS Intrepid (CVA-11) in flight in August 1961. USS INTREPID was written in large capitols above the yellow lightning bolt on the fuselage side. (USN via Barry Miller)



VF-33 F-8E 149170 takes the barrier on the flight deck of the USS Enterprise (CVAN-65) on 8-23-62. (USN)



FIGHTER SQUADRON FOUR THREE, VF-43



VF-43 was commissioned on 1 September 1950. Initially equipped

with F4U-5 Corsairs the squadron changed to the F4U-4 in 1952. VF-43 joined the jet age in 1953 with the F9F-5 Panther. The Panthers were replaced with swept-wing F9F-6 Cougars in early 1955 which in turn were replaced by F9F-8s on 1 July 1957.

In October 1957, all VF-43 aviators were sent to the F8U maintenance course and received training in the F8U operational and procedures trainers prior to the transition to the Crusaders. In February and March, eleven pilots completed their six familiarization hops in the F8U-1s at VF-174. The

first F8U-1 arrived on 3 April 1958 and VF-174 transitioned the remaining nine pilots in April and May.

F8U carquals were conducted in October and the squadron provided CAP duties for fleet units in December as part of DESAIRDEX 2-58 exercises. With fourteen F8U-1s assigned VF-43 was redesignated VF-11 on 16 February 1959.

Although no photographic records of VF-43 F8U-1 Crusaders could be located, I am sure that at least one reader out there could provide us with suitable squadron colors and markings for FITRON 43 Crusaders.

FIGHTER SQUADRON FIVE ONE, VF-51 SCREAMING EAGLES



The Screaming Eagles started out as in 1927 flying Curtiss F6C-4s as VF-3S. The squadron designation was soon changed to VF-3B and the Boeing FB-5 replaced the F6C-4. In 1929 the FB-5 gave way to Boeing F3B-1s which were traded for Boeing F4B-4s in 1931. 1935 saw the retractable gear Grumman F2F-1 join the squadron. In 1937 the squadron was redesignated VF-5B and upgraded F3F-3s were assigned. When war broke out on 7 December 1941 the squadron was equipped with Grumman F4F-3 Wildcats.

The Screaming Eagles were decommissioned on 7 January 1943, and most of the squadron's assets including personnel were assigned to the newly commissioned VF-1. VF-1 was redesignated VF-5 on 15 July 1943 while flying Grumman F6F Hellcats. By February 1945 VF-5 was flying the Vought F4U Corsair. Then on 15 November 1946 VF-5 was redesignated VF-5A while flying the Grumman F8F-1 Bearcat. The

Bearcat was replaced by the North American FJ-1 Fury on 18 November 1947 and VF-5A became the first Navy fleet squadron to operate jets from carriers.

The Screaming Eagles were once again redesignated on 16 August 1948 when they were given their current designation of VF-51. Grumman F9F-2 Panthers replaced the Furies and the squadron flew F9F-2s and F9F-5s during three Korean War deployments. In late 1953 F9F-6 Cougars replaced the Panthers which were replaced by North American FJ-3 Furies in 1955. The squadron transitioned to the supersonic Grumman F11F-1 Tigers in 1958, only to re-equip with Douglas F4D-1 Skyrrays in January 1959.

VF-51 returned from their F4D-1 Skyrray cruise on 11 October 1960 and the Ford pilots were replaced by a group of RAG (see VF-124) trained F-8 Crusader pilots. After a change-of-command ceremony on 10 November

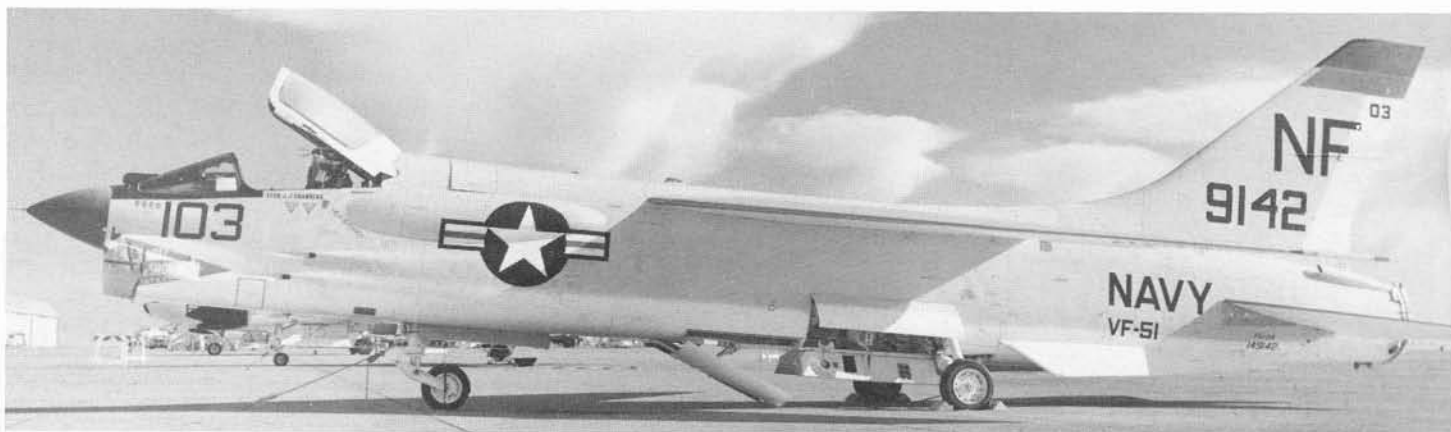
VF-51 F8U-2NE (F-8E) 149154 taxis in at Norton AFB on 5-19-62. Initial F-8E scheme was Spartan with a red tail stripe between the rudder and the fin tip. Early F-8Es also had painted afterburners. (Swisher)

a concentrated training schedule was commenced in the new F8U-1 Crusader to prepare the squadron for a scheduled WESTPAC cruise in the spring of 1961.

VF-51 completed carrier qualifications from 16 until 20 January 1961 aboard the USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14). Then during the first two weeks of February and the first two weeks in March, intensive weapons training was conducted at MCAAS Yuma. From 22 until 26 April, VF-51 acted as day fighter CAP for the Tico in exercise Green Lite off of Southern California.

Fighting Fifty One left on its first

VF-51 F8U-2NE (F-8E) 149142 at NAS Lemoore on 5-30-62. (Swisher)



F-8 WESTPAC cruise on 10 May 1961 aboard the Ticonderoga. On 15 and 16 May 1961 an ORI inspection was conducted in Hawaii. During the deployment a majority of the squadron's aircraft and pilots were shore based at either NAS Atsugi or NAS Cubi Point. The following operations were conducted by VF-51 during this cruise:

- 1.) Operation Checkertail I, strike against Okinawa on 16 June.
- 2.) Operation Big Shot, CAP for Tico on 20-22 June.
- 3.) Operation Checkertail II, strike against Okinawa on 10 July.
- 4.) Operation New Boy, strikes against Luzon on 28 July.
- 5.) Operation Blue Sky, AAWEX with ADCC Taiwan on 7-19 October.
- 6.) Operation Cross Tie, CAP for joint exercises with HMS Victorious on

24-28 October.

7.) Operation Base Hit, strikes against Luzon on 26 November to 8 December.

In addition to these operations, VF-51 participated with an aerial demonstration for the Chinese Nationalist celebration of the Ten-Ten Day, and for Philippine Aviation Week. The Ticonderoga and the squadron returned stateside on 14 January 1962.

After returning from WESTPAC, the squadron transitioned to the F8U-2NE (F-8E) on 8 February 1962. The new Crusaders participated in operation Pot Shot off San Diego on 16-21 March. On 1 April VF-51 took the bomb capable F-8E to NAAS Fallon to learn how to bomb. The squadron returned to NAS Miramar on

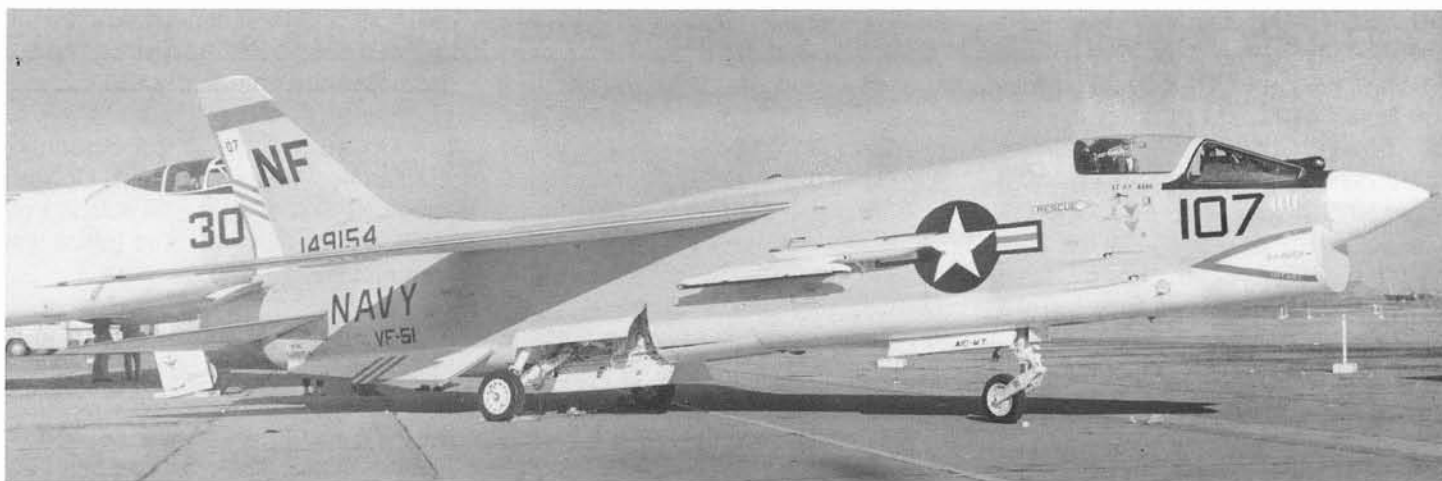
20 April and then conducted carquals aboard the USS Ranger (CVA-61) from 22 June until 3 July 1962.

On 16 July 1962 the Screaming Eagles flew aboard the USS Constellation (CVA-64) during its transit from AIRLANT to AIRPAC. The transit was completed on 17 September.

During the three month pre-deployment period, the squadron had an eight day gunnery deployment at MCAAS Yuma, a ten day carqual refresher deployment, ten day weapons

VF-51 F8U-2NE (F-8E) Crusaders
149140 (#101), 149141 (#102), 149143 (#104), and 149147 (#105) on a gunnery flight. Note that the Bureau Numbers are consecutive because VF-51 was the first AIRPAC F-8E unit. (USN via Miller)





training exercise, and a ten day strike exercise aboard the USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14). The Tico and the Screaming Eagles departed for its WESTPAC cruise on 3 January 1963.

During the ORI off the Hawaiian coast, VF-51 had a very successful Sidewinder firing exercise with all missiles fired resulting in direct hits on DELMAR targets. Because of space limitations, at least one-third of the squadrons aircraft, pilots and enlisted men were shorebased at Sangley Point NS, NAS Cubi Point, or NAS Atsugi.

Because of the F-8E the squadron contributed a significant advancement to fleet capability and readiness by becoming the first squadron to conduct regularly scheduled night operations with supersonic aircraft from the 27 Charlie carrier.

After returning from their first F-8E WESTPAC on 15 July 1963, VF-51 conducted a weapons deployment to MCAS Yuma from 3 November until 21 November. This was followed by four brief training cruises aboard Tico from 5-13 December 1963, 22-31 January 1964, 13 February until 6 March 1964, and 21 March until 3 April 1964.

The squadron deployed again to WESTPAC on 14 April 1964 and conducted an ORI aboard the Tico from 20-23 April while off the coast of Hawaii. The Screaming Eagles were ordered to the USS Constellation (CVA-64) from 5 June until late July of 1964, to provide escort for RF-8As on aerial photographic reconnaissance missions over Southeast Asia. From late July until September the squadron remained at sea off Southeast Asia while aboard the Ticonderoga. After a

VF-51 F-8E 149154 with new red rudder and ventral fin trim on 8-4-63. LT R. P. KARR is painted below the canopy rail. (Swisher)

short layover in Cubi Point, the Tico returned to the South China Sea and Southeast Asia until 15 December 1964 when the cruise was concluded.

Once back at Miramar, VF-51 participated in Operation Fighter Sweep from 16-18 February 1965 and Operations Silver Lance from 26 February until 8 March and Tee Shot from 6 until 8 April. This was followed by a

VF-51 F-8E 150887 on 4-3-65 at NAS Miramar. Double nuts nose number and multicolored check-marks on the rudder identify this as the CAG bird. CDR MAC SNOWDEN and the VF-51 insignia were painted below the canopy rail. (Swisher)





weapons deployment to Yuma from 23 May until 5 June and a carqual exercise aboard the USS Hancock (CVA-19) from 28 June until 1 July 1965. Another weapons deployment, this time to NAAS Fallon, Nevada, took place from 11 until 22 July. Once back at Miramar the squadron took part in operation Hot Stove during August and September 1965.

The Screaming Eagles went to war again aboard the Ticonderoga on 28 September 1965. VF-51 participated in the following large air strikes against North Vietnam; Uong Bi thermal power plant on 12-22-65, Hai Duong highway/railway bridge on 12-23-65, Hai Phong railway bridge on 4-14-66, Ha Tinh complex, Ha Chanh highway bridge, and Bach Long V military area. The squadron returned to Miramar on 13 May 1966 and conducted one last at-sea period aboard

CVA-14 from 8 until 12 August, followed by a weapons deployment to Yuma on 19 September 1966.

VF-51 boarded its new home, the USS Hancock (CVA-19) on 26 November for fleet exercises associated with preparations for the 1967 war cruise. The Hancock and VF-51 sailed for Vietnam on 5 January 1967. Three F-8Es were lost during the cruise, one (149138) was lost to AAA fire and its pilot LT R. W. Dodge became a POW on 5-17-67. The other two were operational losses with 149192 being lost on 2-12-67 and 150301 being lost on 5-1-67. The squadron returned to Miramar on 22 July 1967.

During the summer of 1967 the squadron converted to the remanufactured F-8H Crusader and then departed to Vietnam aboard the USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) on 27

VF-51 F-8E 149201 on 4-3-65 after returning from the 1964 cruise. This well weathered Crusader has the USS TICONDEROGA painted in large letters on the aft fuselage and the USS CONSTELLATION painted in smaller letters. This was because the squadron operated in combat from both carriers during this cruise. LTJG ROY MILLER is painted below the canopy rail and the radome is red. (Clay Jansson)

January 1968. Combat operations soon got under way and once again it was looking as if VF-51 would not get the opportunity to down MiGs. Then on 26 June, CDR "Moose" Myers downed a MiG-21. This was followed by LT Norm McCoy downing a second MiG-21 on 1 August 1968. The squad-

VF-51 F-8E 149153 with TICONDEROGA and CONSTELLATION on the aft fuselage and overspray evident everywhere in order to protect the aircraft from further corrosion. (Swisher)





VF-51 F-8Es arrive aboard the Ticonderoga on 9-24-65, 4 days prior to the 65/66 cruise: CAW-5 CAG, CDR Mac Snowden in 150851; 149147 minus rudder and ventral fin stripes; 149179 with Screaming Eagle insignia under the canopy rail; 149152 with rescue triangle inside the nose number; and 149201 with the pilot wearing an Astronaut type helmet. (William Swisher)





VF-51 COMMAND F-8s

F-8E 150670 on 7-16-66 with CDR C. B. McDANIEL, COMMANDING OFFICER painted on the white and red placard above national insignia. 150670 repainted on 9-17-66 with CDR R. E. FERGUSON ON THE PLACARD. (Jansson) CDR FERGUSON's CAG F-8E 150679 with CAW-5 insignia on the tail and multi-colored rudder stripes on 8-26-67. (Swisher) CDR JACK SNYDER's F-8E 150320. (Clay Jansson)





ron left for home on 29 September 1968 and arrived back at Miramar on 10 October.

The F-8H were traded for F-8Js and the squadron was on its way back to Vietnam aboard the *Bonnie Dick* on 6 April 1969. The Screaming Eagles were unable to add to their 1968 MiG kills during this cruise, and although the squadron did not lose an F-8 in combat, two were lost to operational causes. F-8J 150341 was lost on 26 April and 149226 was lost on 8 May. VF-51 returned to Miramar on 29 October 1969.

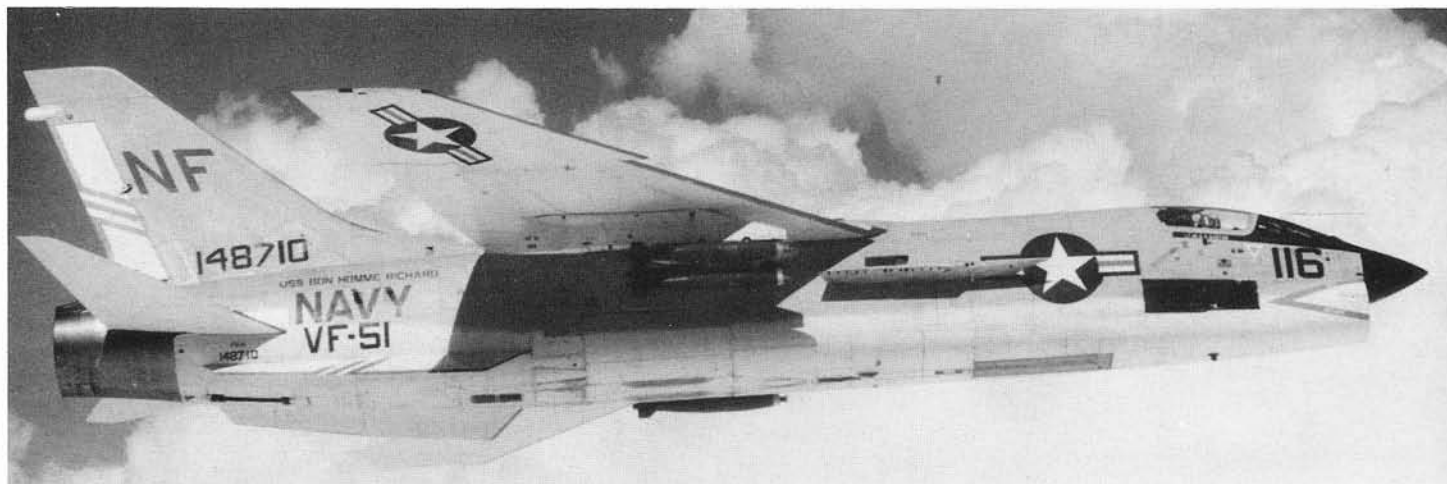
VF-51s last F-8 deployment took place aboard the *Bon Homme Richard* from 2 April 1970 until 12 November 1970. After returning from Vietnam the squadron spent the next year transi-

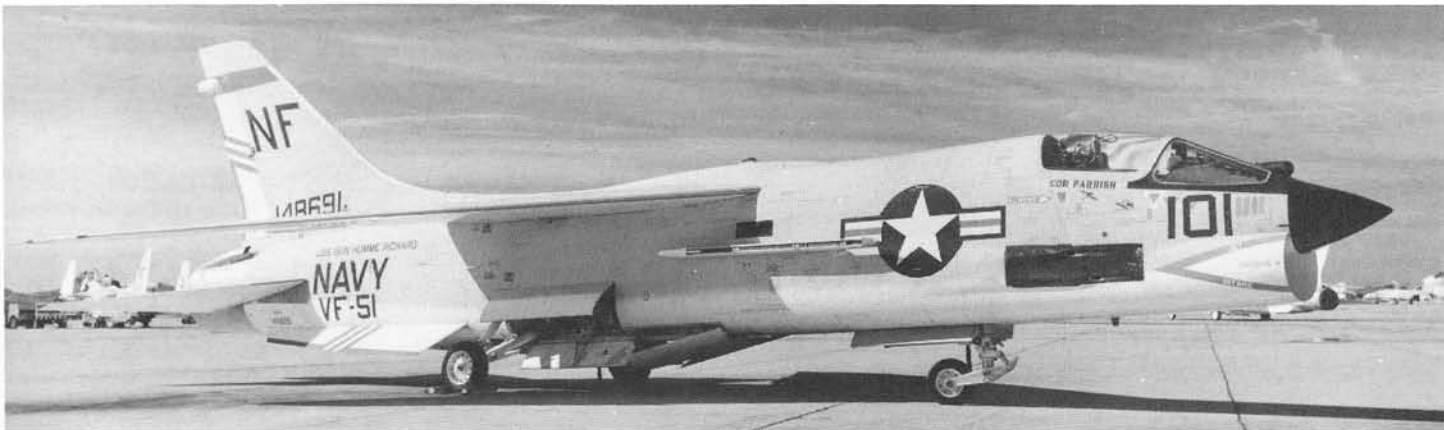
VF-51 F-8E 150845 in the landing configuration passes over the USS Hancock in the Gulf of Tonkin on 31 May 1967. (USN)

tioning to the McDonnell F-4B Phantom, which would score four MiG-17 victories for VF-51.

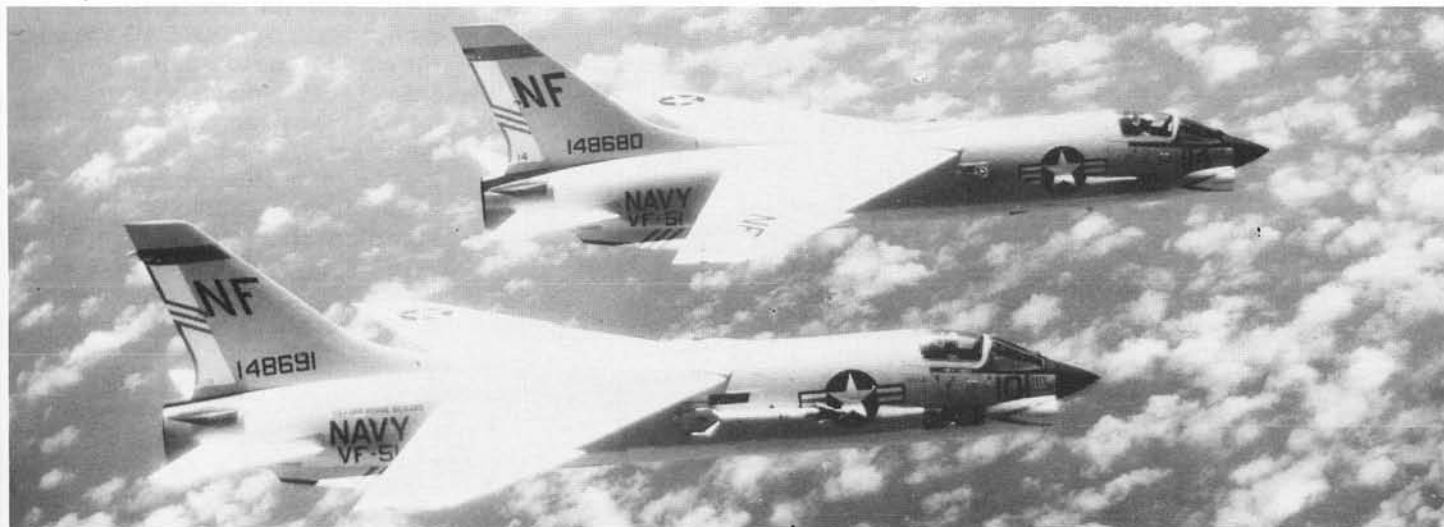
The F-4Bs were replaced with F-4Ns in early 1974 which were replaced in turn by the Grumman F-14A Tomcat on 16 June 1978. VF-51 continues to fly the Tomcat today.

VF-51 F-8H 148710 from the USS Bon Homme Richard loaded with six 500lb. iron bombs heads for Vietnam in 1968.





VF-51 F-8H 148691 on 1-20-68 from the USS Bon Homme Richard with the name CDR PARRISH painted under the canopy rail. The radome and the area surrounding the gun ports were black. (Swisher)



VF-51 F-8Hs 148691 (#101) and 148680 (#114) over the Pacific. (USN) F-8J 149196 launches from the Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) in the Gulf of Tonkin on 13 June 1970. (USN via Barry Miller)





VF-51 F-8J 149155 with CDR A. A. SCHAUFFELBERGER painted under the canopy rail and red-yellow-blue-orange-black diagonal CAG stripes on the rudder on 3-15-69. (Swisher) 149155 again almost one year later on 3-14-70 with a red radome and upper tail stripe. (Jansson) F-8J 150295 on 3-14-70 with shield on tail reading "Adm Joseph Clifton AWARD outstanding Navy fighter squadron 1969." F-8J 150311 over NAS Atsugi on 8-12-70 with the Budweiser man painted on the side. (T. Matsuzaki)



FIGHTER SQUADRON FIVE THREE, VF-53 IRON ANGELS



VF-53 was established on 15 October 1963 when VF-141 (see VF-141) was redesignated VF-53. The Iron Angels were assigned to Carrier Air Wing Five (CVW-5) and won the Chief of Naval Aviation Safety Award for 1963.

Training for a 1964 WESTPAC cruise started on 3 November 1963 with a gunnery deployment to MCAS Yuma, which lasted until 22 November. Carquals were conducted from 5 to 13 December aboard the USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14). This was followed by a weapons training exercise aboard Tico from 22 to 31 January 1964. The Iron Angels and CVA-14 sailed for Hawaii on 13 February and conducted a strike exercise from 23 March until 3 April, prior to deploying to Vietnam.

During this cruise, four Iron Angel pilots came to the aid of the USS Maddox (DD-731) during what became known as the Gulf of Tonkin Incident. On 2 August 1964 while passing off the coast of Hon Me Island, the Maddox was attacked by

three North Vietnamese torpedo boats. The Maddox called for air support, evaded the two torpedos fired at it and engaged the PT boats with gunfire. As the North Vietnamese craft retired, a flight of four VF-53 F-8Es lead by the squadron's CO, CDR R. F. Mohrhardt, arrived overhead and attacked with a load of 20 mike mike and Zuni's. The third PT boat, slowed by previous damage from the destroyer's guns, was set afire and sunk during the Iron Angels' strafing runs. On the night of 4 August the Maddox in company with the USS Turner Joy (DD-951) were attacked by PT boats again.

Zuni rockets are being loaded into the tubes of a VF-53 F-8E aboard the USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14) during the Tonkin Gulf Incident in Aug. 64. (USN)





Because of the two unprovoked attacks in international waters, President Johnson ordered retaliatory attacks against four PT boat bases on 5 August 1964. VF-53's F-8s along with Crusaders, Skyhawks, and Skyraiders from the Ticonderoga and the Constellation proceeded to knock out an estimated twenty-five enemy torpedo boats. The Iron Angels' efforts during these actions resulted in the squadron being awarded the Navy Unit Citation.

The squadron returned to CONUS in December 1964 to commence training for the next WESTPAC deployment. During the training cycle, March 1965 was spent at MCAS Yuma, Arizona, for air-to-air and air-to-ground gunnery exercises. In July a deployment to NAAS Fallon, Nevada, was made to participate in a joint

weapon exercise with other CVW-5 squadrons.

With training completed, the squadron boarded the Tico and departed on 29 September 1965 for the Far East. During the cruise the squadron flew 1,656 combat sorties over North and South Vietnam. A squadron record was established on the cruise when over 1,000 carrier-based hours were flown during the month of March 1966. The CO, CDR Mohrhardt, was shot down by AAA and recovered over the North on 19 April while flying 150853. Two other F-8Es, 149176 and 149179, were lost to operational accidents during this cruise.

Another intensive training period for the squadron began upon return to CONUS in May 1966. In September

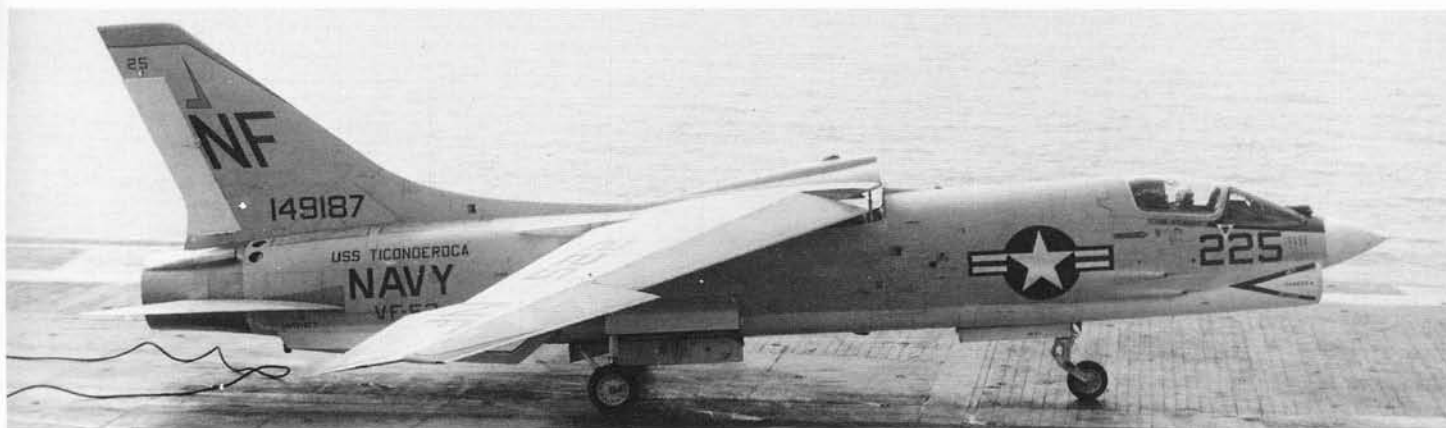
VF-53 F-8E 150877 at Miramar on 4-3-65; tail and ventral fin trim was yellow bordered by black. (Clay Jansson)

the Iron Angels deployed to MCAS Yuma for weapons training in air-to-air gunnery and air-to-ground weapons delivery. During the months of November and December 1966, the Iron Angels made an EASTPAC deployment aboard Hancock for carrier qualifications and further weapons training.

On 5 January 1967, VF-53 departed California aboard the Hancock

VF-53 F-8E 149187 on board the TICONDEROGA on 9-24-65. The folded wings show the yellow and black wing tip trim. The name LCDR C. B. BAILEY is painted below the canopy rail on a yellow background. (Swisher)

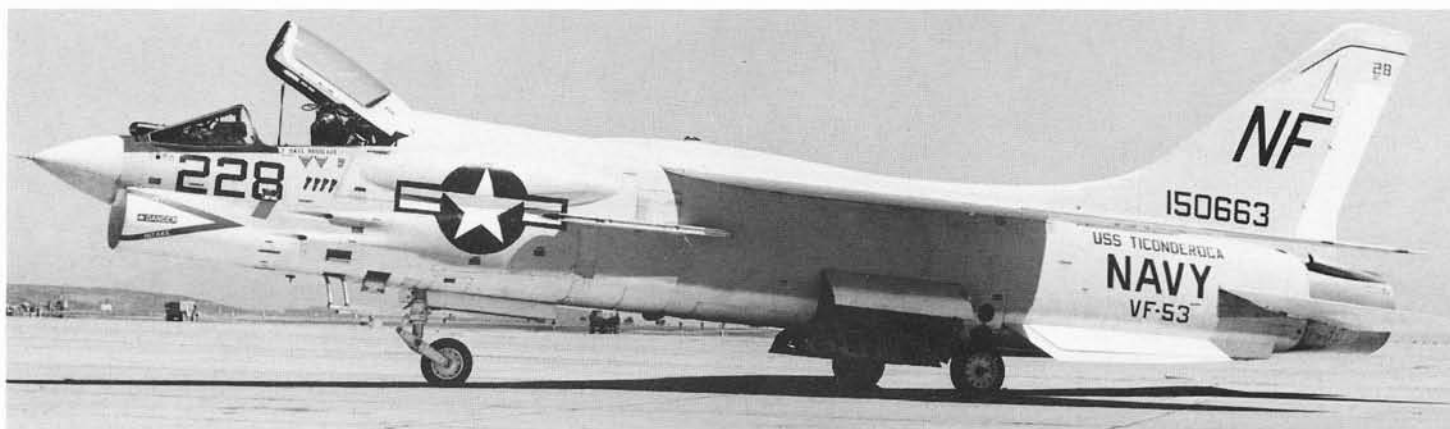




IRON ANGELS 1965-66 USS TICONDEROGA CRUISE

VF-53 F-8Es 149187 (#225), 149151 (#227), 149184 (#232), and 150900 (#234) land aboard the Tico on 9-24-65 while steaming off of North Island, California. Notice the location of the wing codes and the drooped leading edges. 149151 has LT MIKE WELCH painted under the canopy rail. (William Swisher)





VF-53 F-8E 150663 at Miramar after returning from the 1965/66 cruise on 7-16-66. The name LT DAVE BOURLAND is painted under the canopy rail with four mission marks below that. (Clay Jansson)



VF-53 CAG bird, F-8E 150323 repainted for the 1967 cruise aboard Hancock on 9-17-66. (Clay Jansson)

VF-53 F-8E 150877 with under-wing pylon painted in the squadron's second scheme on 9-17-66. (Clay Jansson)





(CVA-19) for its third combat cruise in the Tonkin Gulf. In the following months Iron Angel pilots participated in major strikes against Kep Airfield, Haiphong POL stowage area, several major bridges and railyards near Hai Duong and thermal power plants, trans-shipment areas in the major cities of Dam Dinh and Ninh Binh.

After returning home in July 1967, the Iron Angels deployed for weapons and strike training in October at MCAS Yuma and NAAS Fallon. Once back at Miramar the squadron conducted carrier operations aboard the USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) in preparation for their fourth Vietnam cruise.

On 27 January 1968 Bonnie Dick sailed for the Tonkin Gulf. During the early months of the cruise, March and April, the weather over the North prevented the squadron from conducting strikes into assigned Lines of Communications (LOC) sectors. The majority of the first line period was

spent flying weather reconnaissance, BARCAP, FORCAP, and limited strikes into South Vietnam and Laos. This negated the requirement for TARCAP and MIGCAP and therefore the F-8 was used as a bomber to increase the effectiveness of the Air Wing's daily assignments.

On 20 March 1968, the weather cleared sufficiently over the North to afford the Air Wing the opportunity to launch its first Alfa Strike into North Vietnam. The strike was conducted against the Thanh Hoa Transshipment Point. Light resistance was encountered and the strike group incurred no losses.

During the Subic Bay inport period following the first line period, a bombing restriction was announced by President Johnson. This affected operations for the remainder of the cruise, as bombing was no longer permitted north of 19 degrees. The remainder of the cruise developed into a relatively normal routine of opera-

VF-53 F-8E 149215 at Miramar on 8-26-67. The Iron Angel insignia can be seen on the tail. The tail, wing and ventral fin markings were yellow bordered by black. (William Swisher)

tions with daily strikes into assigned Lines of Communications sectors against transshipment points, rail lines, and storage areas. Then, during the months of May and June, the employment of enemy fighters brought aerial combat to VF-53 and Air Wing Five.

On 29 July 1968, four Iron Angel fighters engaged four enemy MiG-17s. When the ensuing battle was ended, VF-53 had joined the MiG Killers, when CDR Guy Crane, Executive Officer, scored a MiG Kill shooting down one MiG-17. A few days later, on 1 August, LT George E. Hise joined up with a pilot from VF-51

VF-53 F-8E 150349 on 1-20-68 just prior to their 1968 cruise. A replacement metal panel can be seen behind the cockpit. (Clay Jansson)



and succeeded in severely damaging a MiG-21. Although the aircraft was finally downed by the VF-51 pilot, LT Norman McCoy, Jr., the airmanship and teamwork exhibited by the two pilots were considered outstanding.

At the completion of the cruise, the Iron Angels flew eight of their F-8Es to the Continental United States via Guam, Wake, and Hawaii. Upon arrival at San Diego on 10 October 1968, the squadron commenced a thirty day stand down period.

On 31 October 1968 VF-53 traded their F-8Es for upgraded F-8J Crusaders. The new aircraft was an improved version of the F-8E and included a more sophisticated air-intercept radar (APQ-124), more advanced DECM equipment (ALQ-100), a radar warning and homing device (APR-30), and a boundary layer control (BLC) wing. A more substantial landing gear combined with BLC and double drooped ailerons provided the F-8J with the capability of increased gross landing weights and a decrease in landing approach speeds of approximately 15-18kts. The new aircraft were not fully operationally equipped when received, however, posing many problems during the ensuing training cycle. Immediately a major modification program was started at NARF North Island to complete installation of necessary equipment. The time required for this modification program cost the squadron many valuable flight hours of training.

The F-8J modifications increased the airframe weight by about 2,000lbs and reduced the J57P20 engine thrust available in BLC, by about 1,000lbs. The drag configuration and aircraft maneuverability were affected by changes both to wing, UHT and thrust-to-weight ratio. The F-8J was in fact a new improved aircraft that developed less maneuverability potential, restrictions for employment, and had failures not common to prior F-8 series aircraft. The F-8J was limited to carrying two AIM-9D/G Sidewinders.

On 1 December 1968, the squadron deployed to MCAS Yuma for a one week training period in twenty thou-

sand foot air-to-air gunnery. This period of training was immediately followed by a one week period of intensive combined air wing training operations at Fallon, Nevada.

The fifth Iron Angel war cruise started on 18 March 1969, when CVW-5 deployed aboard the USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31). After a brief operating period off the Hawaiian Islands, the ship commenced a 15 day transit to the Naval Station, Subic Bay, arriving at Subic Bay on 15 April 1969. At this time a Navy EC-121 Warning Star was shot down by a North Korean MiG off the Sea of Japan. As a result of the EC-121 incident, Task Force 71 was formed and CVA-31 and VF-53 were assigned to this force. The Bon Homme Richard was immediately ordered to get underway for Yankee Station. Combat operations commenced on 18 April 1969 and lasted until 8 October, with operations from both Yankee Station and in the waters off Okinawa.

The cruise was uneventful insofar as there being any aerial combat. All MiG activity took place above the 19th parallel and the rules of engagement precluded fighters from entering North Vietnam airspace unless in pursuit of enemy aircraft which had attempted to penetrate US airspace.

The squadron experienced near tragedy on five occasions when aircraft were lost at sea. None of these losses were due to combat, and all five pilots were recovered. LT Mansell ejected when a fuel cell ruptured during inflight refueling; LCDR Lusk ditched his F-8 when the afterburner failed during the catapult shot; LT Wells and LT Manlove ejected when they experienced engine failure; and LCDR Taylor ejected when his controls failed.

Upon arrival at San Diego on 29 October 1969, the squadron commenced a thirty-day stand-down period, after which an intensive training period commenced in preparation for the 1970 combat deployment. This deployment commenced on 2 April 1970, and was the squadron's sixth war cruise.

Because of the bombing restrictions, strike missions were not flown into North Vietnam. The only actual combat missions were occasional strafing runs made in Laos after completing TARCAP assignments. Operations consisted of a normal routine for combat support missions; BARCAP, FORCAP, Photo Escort and Weather Recce. Sorties. Armed Photo Reconnaissance sorties were flown over Laos and over Route Package II in North Vietnam. Most weather recce assignments were flown in Laos.

During the cruise, the squadron lost its youngest pilot, LTJG Lloyd G. Howie on 15 May, and shortly thereafter, on 14 June, its senior pilot and skipper, CDR Dean Elmer Kaiser.

Howie's aircraft went down in the Gulf of Tonkin following a normal two hour BARCAP mission over the Northern Gulf. He had taken two wave-offs from the BHR and was proceeding with instructions to tank while heading in-bound to Da Nang. Shortly after refueling, both aircraft entered a thin cloud layer and both pilot and aircraft were never seen again.

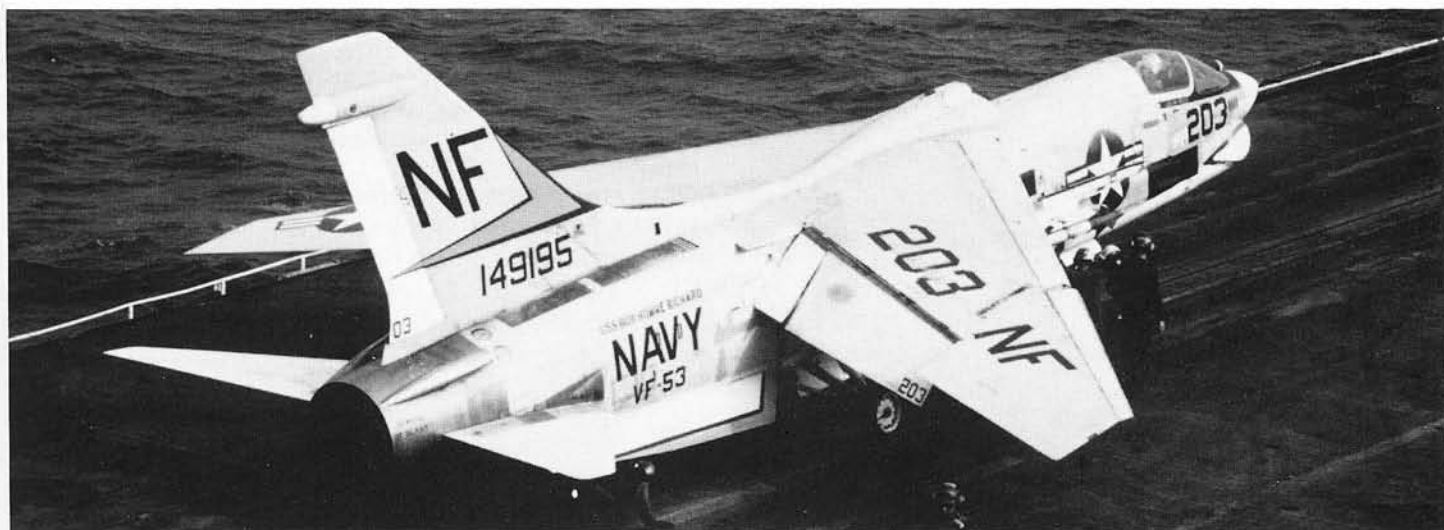
CDR Kaiser was lost while participating in a scheduled fly-off to NAS Cubi Point, after completion of a Yankee Station line period. CDR Kaiser and his wingman were climbing through 35,000'MSL when CDR Kaiser directed afterburner selection. The wingman's burner failed to light and he soon lost sight of his skipper, who in turn tried to find his wingman. CDR Kaiser disappeared and one of the most extensive searches in Naval History began. Available assets were drawn from Clark AFB, NAS Cubi and NAS Sangley Point as well as complete participation by the BHR and America and all available surface units in the Subic Bay areas. Despite the effort, neither CDR Kaiser or his aircraft were ever found.

All squadron aircraft were brought back to the States aboard the Bonnie Dick, which arrived in San Diego on 12 November 1970. Upon arrival at Miramar the squadron began preparing for the disestablishment of the squadron on 29 January 1971.

VF-53 F-8Es 149158 (#206) and 150900 (#209) on 18 March 1967 while flying toward targets over North Vietnam. The area around the gunports was painted black. (USN)

VF-53 F-8J 149195 prepares to launch from the USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) in June of 1970. See page one for a color photo of this aircraft. (Barry Miller)

149195 again in June 1970 while orbiting the ship prior to making its approach for recovery aboard the Bon Homme Richard. Aircraft is equipped with the "Y" racks and twin Sidewinders. (USN)



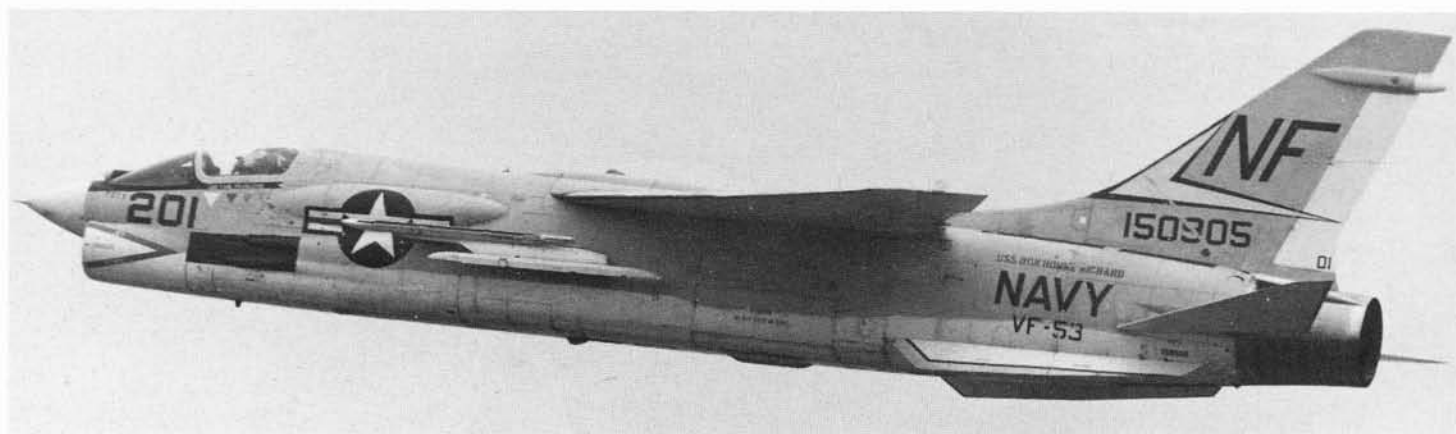


VF-53 F-8J 150877 on 3-15-69 at NAS North Island during the major modification program to prepare the new F-8Js for Vietnam employment. (William Swisher)

VF-53 F-8J, belonging to LT BILL TRIONE after a nose gear failure at Da Nang in June 1970. (Barry Miller)

VF-53 CAG Bird, F-8J 150343 at Da Nang in June 1970. CDR JOE ELLISON CAG is painted below the canopy rail. The multicolor tail colors were red-yellow-blue-orange. (Barry Miller)

VF-53 F-8J 150905 takes off from NAS Atsugi on 12 August 1970. (T. Matsuzaki)



FIGHTER SQUADRON SIX TWO, VF-62 BOOMERANGS (BOOMERS)



VF-62 was commissioned on 1 July 1955 at NAS Cecil Field and was equipped with North American FJ-3 Fury aircraft. The squadron would deploy their Furys aboard the USS Randolph (CVA-15) and the USS Essex (CVA-9) prior to converting to F8U-1 Crusaders in 1960.

On 1 March 1960, VF-62 received its first F8U-1s. All but four pilots were transferred out and ten new RAG trained (VF-174) pilots were received to initiate the transition. On 1 June the Boomerangs deployed aboard the USS

Shangri-La (CVA-38) to the Caribbean. In addition to a concentrated shake-down cruise, VF-62 conducted a highly successful gunnery program at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Day and night carrier qualifications were completed for all pilots and the Shang returned to Mayport on 18 July. The squadron then returned to Cecil to complete COMPLEXES in gunnery and intercepts.

On 6 September 1960, VF-62 deployed again in Shangri-La and sailed for the North Atlantic in order to participate in the major NATO exercise Sword Thrust. During this exercise, operations were conducted in the Norwegian Sea and North Atlantic, in conjunction with other NATO forces. The only VF-62 mishap was a faulty catapult shot on which the squadron XO, CDR J. E. Davis, went off the starboard side of the deck, where the F-8 broke up and sank. CDR Davis, however, escaped without injury and was recovered by helicopter. At the completion of Sword Thrust, the Shang docked in Southampton, England, for ten days prior to sailing for

Mayport on 10 October.

On 16 November, the training cycle took VF-62 aboard the Shangri-La for a two week refresher cruise to the Caribbean. The squadron returned to Cecil Field on 28 November, where normal training was resumed and Christmas was spent at home.

On 1 February, VF-62 embarked aboard the Shangri-La for Rota, Spain. Three months of extensive gunnery and tactics training was accomplished at Rota, after which the squadron returned to Cecil Field on 16 May. Just two weeks after return from the Mediterranean, the Boomerangs were ordered to load back aboard the Shang on 1 June for an emergency deployment to the Dominican Republic, where a political crisis was taking place. After two weeks off the Dominican Republic the squadron proceeded to the Island of Vieques to participate in

VF-62's XO, CDR J. E. Davis in F8U-1 145350, hangs momentarily in the catwalk of CVA-38 before falling into the North Sea in Sept 1960. (USN)



fullscale Marine landing exercises prior to returning home on 20 June 1961. Day and night refresher carquals were conducted between 18 and 28 July and between 21 and 27 August.

September and October were spent in concentrated training of radar and Sidewinder intercept techniques. Then on 1 November the entire squadron deployed to Leeward Point, NAS Guantanamo, for three weeks of intensive air-to-air gunnery. The Boomers set a NAVAIRLANT record in November by flying 809 hours in one month. The squadron returned to Cecil in December, but Christmas leave was curtailed due to the mount-

ing political tensions in Latin America. Because of this the squadron maintained a combat ready status 24 hours a day into the New Year.

In the month of January 1962, day and night refresher carquals were conducted off the Florida coast aboard the USS F. D. Roosevelt (CVA-42), with all pilots becoming day and night qualified.

On 8 February 1962, VF-62 was temporarily assigned to Carrier Air Group One for the Shakedown cruise of the world's largest ship and first nuclear aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise (CVAN-65). A group of five

VF-62 pilots had already operated on the Big "E" in mid-January, when CDR G. C. Tally, CAG ONE, made the first jet landing on the Enterprise. Operating out of Guantanamo Bay, the Big "E" received the highest mark ever attained by a Navy ship while under shakedown. VF-62 was no less impressive, as it flew 614.6 hours during the month of March alone, and accounted for 548 of the 2908 landings amassed on the nuclear carrier.

In early April of 1962, VF-62 again joined the Big "E" where in company with the USS Forrestal (CVA-59), the squadron took part in a joint air show and firepower demonstration for President John F. Kennedy and members of Congress. Five VF-62 pilots; CDR Moorer, LCDR Elmer, LT Oliver, and LT Heiss had the honor of shaking hands with the president following the giant demonstration.

CDR George C. Talley's F8U-1 Crusader 145375 was the first aircraft to land aboard the USS Enterprise (CVAN-65) in January 1962. CDR Tally was CAG of Air Group One aboard Enterprise. (USN)



In late October 1962, during the initial build-up for the Cuban Missile Crisis, Fighting Sixty Two was put under temporary control of the U. S. Air Force. Under the Tactical Air Command all activities were coordinated through CVG-10. The primary mission during this period was strike and fighter escort for attack aircraft.

The Boomers were temporarily assigned to CVG-3 aboard the USS Lexington (CVS-16) until 26 November 1962 when they were reassigned back to CVG-10. The squadron returned to Cecil Field on 14 December and sent five F-8Bs to NAS Key West to stand fighter alert duty from 19 December until January 1963. Then, between 29 January until 20 March, four aircraft were assigned fighter alert at NAS Leeward Point, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The remainder of the squadron stayed at Cecil during January, February, and March. Training centered around Sidewinder intercepts against DELMAR tow targets and in air-to-air gunnery.

In April and May of 1963 the Boomers embarked on a shakedown cruise aboard the Shangri-La. During this cruise four F-8Bs were deployed to NAS McCalla, Guantanamo Bay, and accomplished another first for the fleet by flying alerts from the 4,300 foot airstrip. The F-8s utilized Morest gear to make over 150 field arrestments while flying CAP missions while defending Guantanamo.

During the cruise a Boomerang pilot logged the 50,000th landing on the Shang since her recommissioning. Another Boomer pilot, LTJG Walker successfully ejected after a ramp strike at night. His rescue became famous when he was found hanging feet dry from the chute which had caught the deck edge protrusion by the #2 elevator.

June and July of 1963 saw the F-8Bs being replaced by factory-fresh F-8Es. Concentrating on radar techniques, the squadron quickly became a proficient all-weather fighter outfit. In August the pilots logged day and night

refresher landings aboard the Shang and experimented with the new attack capabilities of the F-8E.

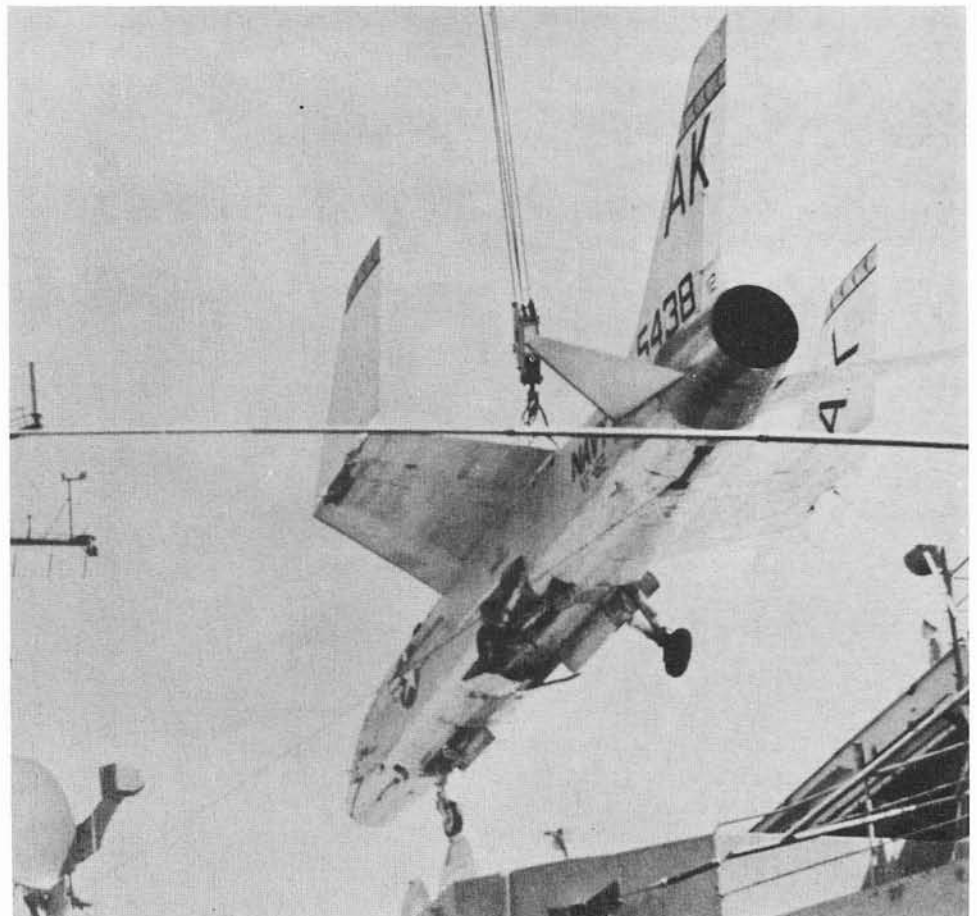
CVA-38 and VF-62 departed for the MED on 1 October 1963. The Shang steamed through the Straits of Gibraltar on October 11 and relieved the USS Saratoga (CVA-60) at Golfo di Palmas two days later. VF-62 and Air Wing Ten put on a air power demonstration for the NATO Defense College in early November. This was followed by a NATO exercise named the Invasion of Spain. December saw VF-62 attack a French Air Group from their carrier the FOCH, in a joint NATO exercise. Another exercise, operation Quick Draw I-64 was conducted in January. The Shang was relieved by the USS F. D. Roosevelt (CVA-42) in mid-May and sailed for home.

VF-62 was on the move again when it participated in Operation Sail in June 1964 as part of the World's Fair festivities at New York. Then, after returning to Mayport, the squadron demonstrated the versatility of the F-8E to visiting Midshipmen.

In September 1964 the Boomers found their seagoing home on the USS Independence (CVA-62). The Big "I" was taking part in a joint NATO exercise in the North Atlantic, and VF-62 was taken along to keep Soviet reconnaissance aircraft under observation if they attempted to approach the force. This mission proved very productive with the squadron intercepting more than twenty-five intruders. The Indy was then diverted to the MED for a month to give the FDR emergency relief. During this period, LTJG Larie Clark successfully ejected after his Crusader flamed-out in the groove and hook skipped #3 and #4 wires.

VF-62 again deployed aboard the Shang on 15 February 1965 for a seven month MED cruise. While on this cruise, the squadron sent a three

VF-62 F-8B 145438 is being hoisted aboard the Shangri-La in 1963. VF-62 F8U-1 (F-8A) and F8U-1E (F-8B) aircraft were marked with yellow wing tip and upper tail stripes bordered by black with black boomerangs painted on them. (USN)





plane detachment to the USS Saratoga (CVA-60) for a two month period. The squadron returned to Cecil in September and on the 29th of October was presented the COMNAVAIRLANT Battle Readiness Excellence Plaque by RADM H. H. Caldwell, COMFAIRJAX.

From 15 December 1965 until 15 January 1966 VF-62 was assigned alert duty at NAS Key West. Once back at Cecil training exercises continued until June 1966 when VF-62 deployed aboard the Shang for a training cruise to Cuba.

After returning to Cecil on 28 July,

the Boomers traded in their F-8Es for F-8Ds. The squadron took the "D" model on a MED cruise beginning on 29 September 1966. Once in the MED, they participated in operations Phiblex with the Marines, Lafayette with the French and Dawn Clear with the Italians.

While conducting a joint exercise with the USS America, VF-62 had the misfortune of a mid-air collision. Both pilots, LCDR Joe Vinti and LTJG Ed Davis, ejected safely and were returned to the Shang amidst happy squadron members. This deployment was followed by two further Shang deployments. These deployments

VF-62 F-8E 150352 with the words CDR JOE MOORER painted under the canopy rail on 8-1-63. (USN)

were; from 14 November 1967 until 4 August 1968 and from 7 January 1969 until 1 July 1969.

The Boomerangs (Boomers or Yellowtails) of VF-62 were decommissioned at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, on 1 October 1969.

VF-62 F-8E 150915 while on temporary duty with the USS INDEPENDENCE. ON LOAN TO, is painted in small letters above USS INDEPENDENCE on the fuselage side. (USN via Barry Miller)





Two VF-62 F-8E Crusaders, 150339 (#207) and 150341 (#208) in flight. When the F-8Es arrived the markings changed to a wide yellow stripe which almost covered the complete tail, see the color photo on the inside back cover. (USN via Barry Miller)



VF-62 F-8E 150923 on 5-1-66. The aircraft is freshly painted and the large yellow tail and small black boomerangs can be easily seen. (William Swisher)

VF-62 F-8D 148708 at Cecil on 5-25-67. The tail code has been changed to "AJ", denoting assignment to CVW-8. (Clay Jansson)



LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHIC SQUADRON SIX THREE, VFP-63 EYES OF THE FLEET

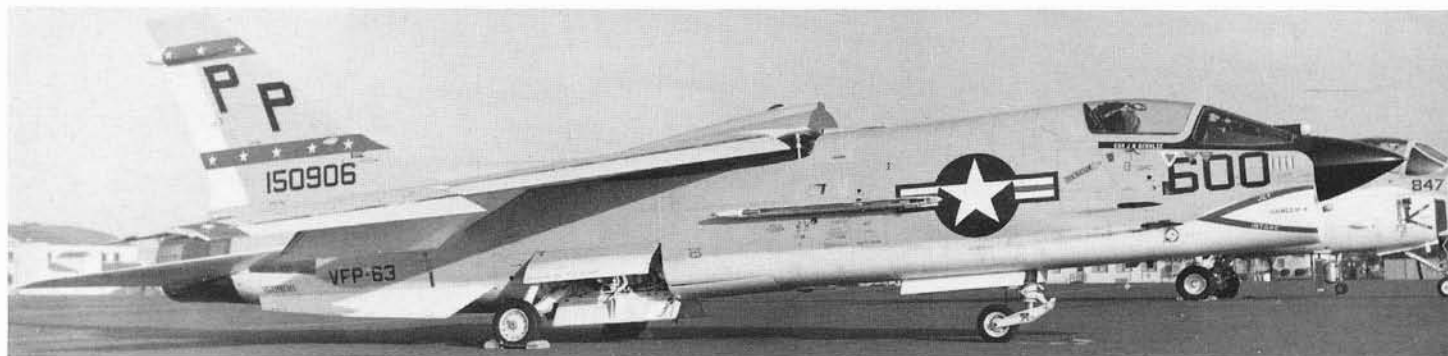


VFP-63 was established on 1 July 1961 when VCP-63 was redesignated. VFP-63 flew the Crusader exclusively until the squadron was disestablished on 30 June 1982. (See Naval Fighters Number Seventeen, Navy and Marine RF-8 Photo-Recon Squadrons, for information and photos of the squadron's photo birds.)

Due to the dwindling number of F-8 fighter squadrons, VFP-63 took over F-8 replacement training from

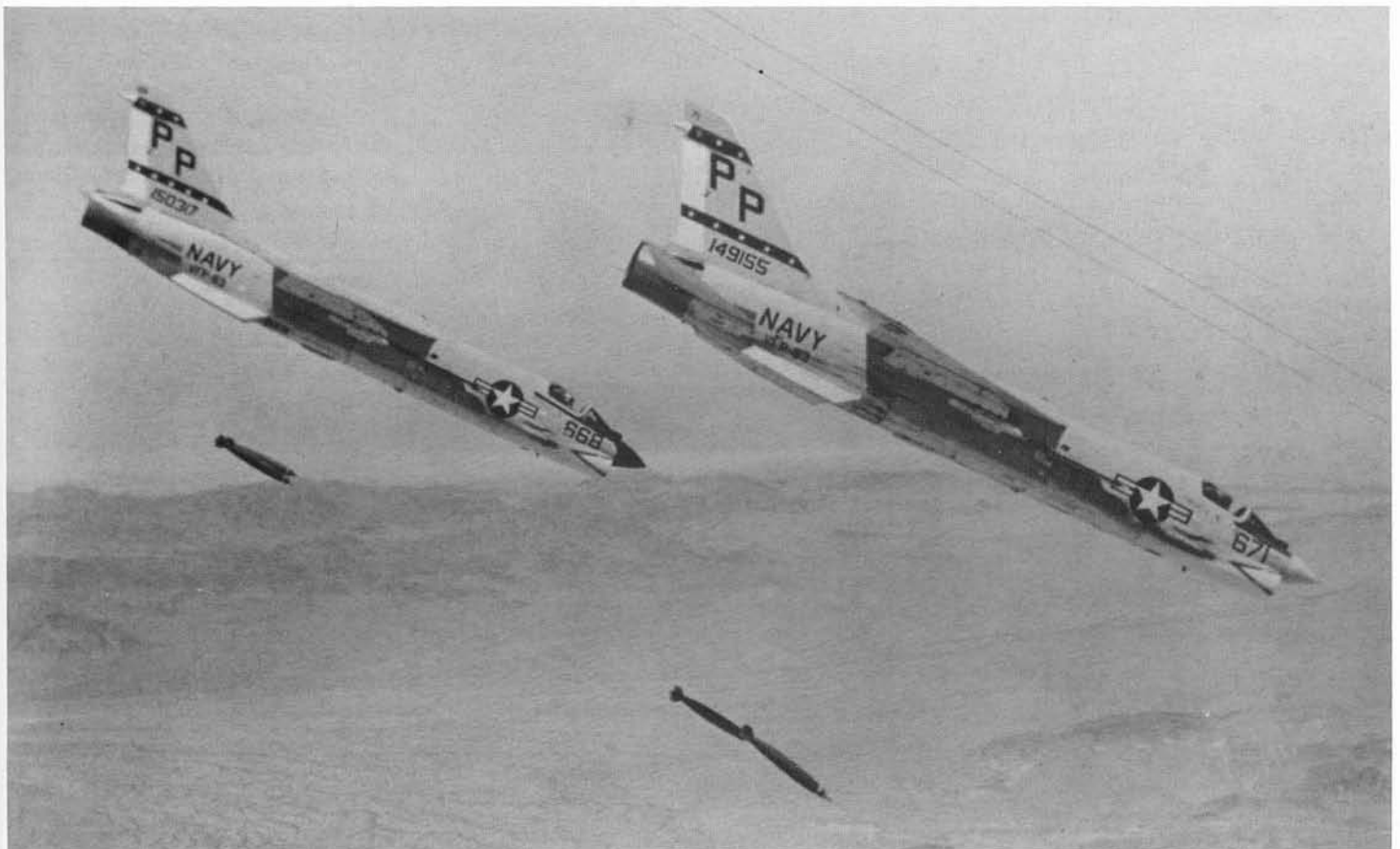
VF-124 in September 1972. For fighter pilot training the squadron acquired F-8J and F-8H Crusaders. Then in 1975 when the F-8 fighter squadrons were disbanded, VFP-63 discontinued F-8 replacement training, but contin-

Red trimmed F-8H 147916 with sharkmouth on 10-25-69. The words LT JERRY UNRUH were painted below the canopy rail. F-8J 150849 with red tail stripes and LCDR BILL EVANS painted below the canopy rail. (Jansson) Red trimmed F-8J 150906 belonging to CDR J. M. SCHULZE ON 10-28-72. (Swisher)





VFP-63 was not only responsible for transitional flight training, but for gunnery and weapons training as seen here. F-8J 150317 launches 2.75" rockets from wing mounted launchers. (USN via Barry Miller) 150317 again while dropping bombs in company with F-8J 149155. Tail stripes were red with white stars. (USN/Tailhook VF03726)





VFP-63 F-8J 149185 at Miramar on 10-6-74 with FIGHTERTOWN painted above NAVY on the rear fuselage. Tail and wing stripes were red with white stars and the double nuts on the tail was in red. The name CDR COLE HAINES CO was painted under the canopy rail. (Ginter)



F-8H 147050 at Miramar in 1974, minus the usual red tail and wing stripes. (via Burger)



F-8J 150302 in overall grey with black trim and "CDR TACO BELL" (see page 55 for LCDR TACO BELL and his VF-24 F-8J 150340) painted under the canopy. Mini flames around gun ports were red. (Ginter, 1979)



VFP-63 F-8J 150904 in overall light grey color with dark grey markings, in 1980. (via Burger)



ANTI-SUBMARINE FIGHTER SQUADRON SEVEN SIX, VSF-76 FIGHTING SAINTS



VSF-76 was one of two New Orleans-based squadrons tasked with the mission of providing fighter cover for anti-submarine carriers. VSF-76 was assigned to CVSGR-70 and was commissioned in July 1968 as VSF-11X2. Flying A-4B Skyhawks the squadron was split into VSF-75XI and VSF-70XI. The A-4Bs were replaced with A-4Cs and the squadron was redesignated VSF-76. In 1971 the A-4Cs were replaced by F-8Hs. In August 1973, VSF-76 and VSF-86 were redesignated VC-13.



VSF-76 F-8H 148661 at NAS New Orleans in May 1973, with black diamonds on a white rudder. (J. Weathers via F. Roos)

VSF-76 F-8H 148662 at NAS New Orleans in 1973 with the squadron insignia on the tail. (J. Weathers via F. Roos)



FIGHTER SQUADRON EIGHT FOUR, VF-84 VAGABONDS / JOLLY ROGERS

VF-84 was commissioned at NAS Oceana, Virginia, on 1 July 1955. Originally nicknamed Vagabonds and flying the FJ-3 Fury, VF-84 was assigned to Air Task Group 182 (ATG-182). Flying a mixed bag of FJ-3s and FJ-3Ms, the Vagabonds made their first deployment as part of Carrier Air Group One (CVG-1) aboard the USS Forrestal (CVA-59) from January through July 1957.

The Furys were replaced by F8U-2 Crusaders in early 1959. Then on 15 April, the Jolly Rogers of VF-61 were decommissioned with VF-84 being the recipient of most of VF-61's personnel. A vote was taken and the Vagabonds nickname was replaced by that of Jolly Rogers.

The squadron adjusted quickly to the hot new Crusaders by coming in first in the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Meet and by winning the Crusader Excellence Award in 1959 and the Efficiency "E" for 1960.

VF-84 deployed the Crusader as part of CVG-7 aboard the USS Independence (CVA-62) from August 1960 through March 1961. VF-84 and its sister squadron VF-13 (F-3Bs) participated in the blockade of Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Following this action, the Jolly Rogers deployed to the MED in 1963-64.

The F-8Cs were replaced by F-4 Phantoms in 1964, which in turn were replaced by F-14s in June 1976.



VF-84 F8U-2 145559 at NAF Washington in May 1959. VF-84 was the first Navy squadron to receive the F8U-2 (F-8C). (Crimmins) 146979 in full squadron markings.



F8U-2 145587 on 8-29-59; see color photo on inside cover. (R. T. O'Dell via Larkins)





VF-84 F8U-2s 145572 (#206), 145585 (#212), and 145587 (#213) aboard Independence on 9 October 1959. (USN) F8U-2 145575 on 23 April 1960 at NAS South Weymouth. (Jim Burrige) F8U-2 146934. (C. T. Modlin via Larkins) Colorful trim was yellow and black. Nose flames were yellow and red.





VF-84 F8U-2s 146957 (#202), 145554 (#210), 145575 (#207), and (#212) over the Med on 5-22-62. (USN)

Two VF-84 F8U-2s in flight over the Mediterranean Sea on 5-14-62, while flying from the Independence. (USN via Miller)



VF-84 F8U-2 (F-8C) in outdoor storage, date and place unknown. The name "CO CDR A. J. NEMOFF" is below canopy. (Brown)



VF-84 F8U-2 145559
CAG BIRD with rudder colors red, blue, yellow, green, white, orange, and black.
(Vought)

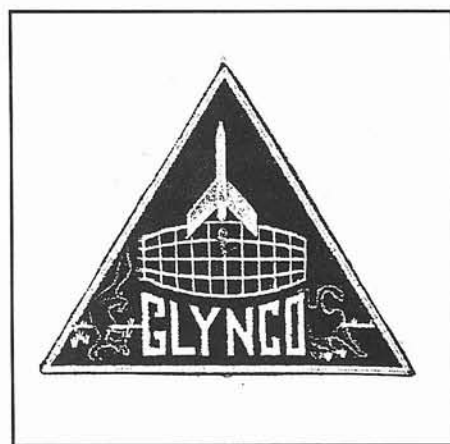


TRAINING SQUADRON EIGHT SIX, VT-86 SABRE HAWKS



During the 1960s VT-86 was tasked with providing radar training for F-8D and F-8E pilots, and as such operated a small number of T-39Ds equipped with AN/APQ-94 fire control radars. In addition to the T-39Ds, the squadron operated a number of F-8 Crusaders. The Sabre Hawks were based at NAS Glynco while flying the Crusader.

VT-86 F-8A 145336 at MCAS El Toro on 5-20-67. The tail and outer wings were red. (William Swisher)

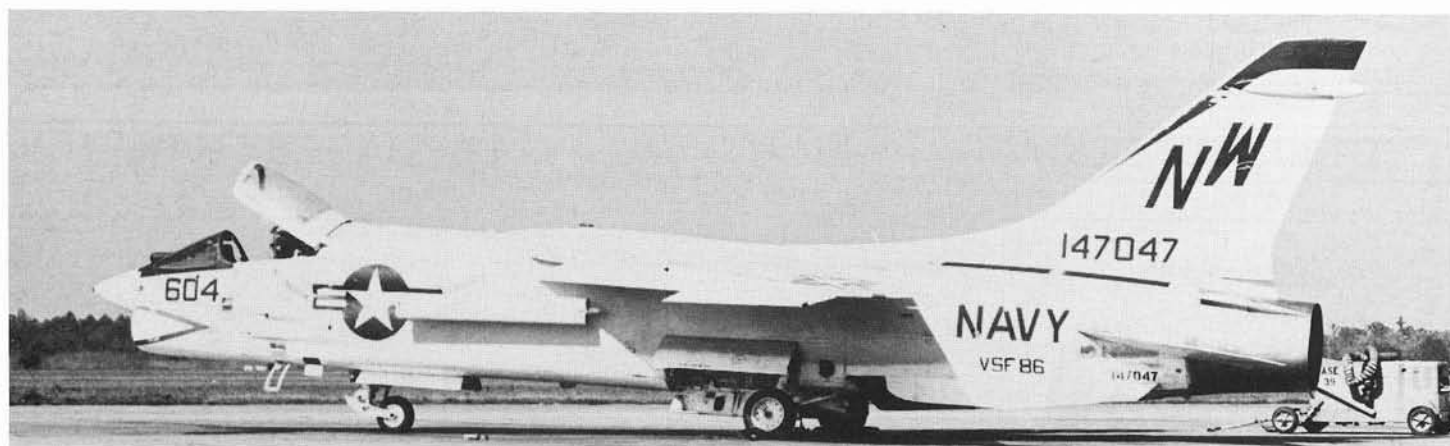


ANTI-SUBMARINE FIGHTER SQUADRON EIGHT SIX, VSF-86 GATORS



VSF-86 was the second F-8 anti-submarine fighter squadron (see VSF-76). VSF-86 was assigned to CVSGR-80 and was commissioned as VSF-11X2 in July 1968 while flying A-4Bs. The squadron was split into VSF-80X3 and VSF-85X4. The A-4Bs were replaced by A-4Cs and VSF-80X3 and VSF-85X4 were redesignated VSF-86. The A-4Cs were replaced by F-8Hs in 1971. In August 1973 VSF-76 and VSF-86 were redesignated VC-13.

VSF-86 F-8H 147047 in black trim in 1973. (J. Weathers via F. Roos)



FIGHTER SQUADRON NINE ONE, VF-91 RED LIGHTNINGS



VF-91 was originally commissioned as VF-20 in 1942 while equipped with Grumman F6F-3 Hellcats. F6F-5s replaced the F6F-3s in August 1944 and on 20 October, the squadron destroyed eighteen Japanese aircraft over Taiwan. VF-20 was transferred to NAAS Charleston in 1946 and redesignated VF-9A on 15 November. Assigned to the newly



commissioned USS Philippine Sea (CV-47) for her 1946/47 shakedown cruise, the squadron flew a mixed bag of F6F-5P Hellcats and F8F-1 Bearcats. This was followed by a Med cruise in 1948.

In September 1948, VF-9A was redesignated VF-91. The squadron deployed to Korea in 1953 with F9F-2 Panthers. F9F-6 Cougars replaced the Panthers in 1954, which in turn was replaced by FJ-3 Furys in 1956.

VF-91 F8U-2 145566 from the USS Ranger in May 1960. (USN via Downey)

The Red Lightnings obtained the F8U-1 Crusader, an aircraft capable of the speed the squadron's name implied, in December 1958. These were replaced with F8U-2s in September 1959. VF-91 deployed its F8U-2s (F-8Cs) twice aboard the USS Ranger (CVA-61) before the squadron was redesignated VF-194 (see VF-194) on 1 August 1963.

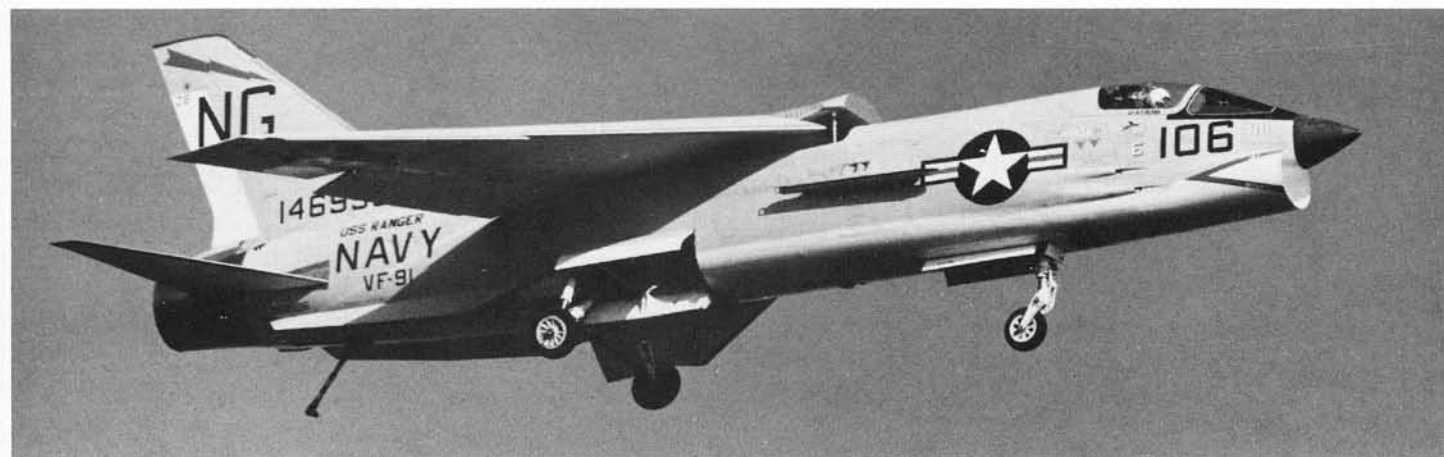


VF-91 F8U-2 147008 sports a thin red stripe below the black fin tip as it taxis in at San Francisco on 9-18-60. (William T. Larkins)



VF-91 F-8Cs 146994 (#104), 146997 (#101), 146993 (#103), and 145565 (#108) in flight over Mount Fujiyama, Japan, in September 1962. 146994 and 146993 have a red tail stripe just below the fin tip. (USN)

VF-91 F-8C 146996 landing at NAS Atsugi, Japan, on 12-10-62. The red lightning bolt that would become standard on VF-194 F-8s has been added to the tail and the pilot's name, LT S. C. FLYNN is under the canopy rail. (T. Matsuzaki)



FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE ZERO THREE, VF-103 SLUGGERS



VF-103 was commissioned on 1 May 1952 at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, in response to the Korean War. The squadron was initially equipped with Vought FG-1D Corsairs and assigned to CVG-10. The Sluggers transitioned to the Grumman F9F-6 Cougar in July 1953. Between 1953 and 1957, the dash sixes were upgraded to F9F-8s and finally F9F-8Bs. CVG-10 and VF-103 deployed its Cougars aboard the USS Coral Sea (CVA-43).

Late in 1957, transition training for the Vought F8U-1 Crusader started and the Sluggers entered the supersonic age. The first Crusader cruise

took place aboard the USS Forrestal (CVA-59) between September 1958 and March 1959. Upon return to Cecil Field, VF-103 was reassigned to CVG-8 and was transferred to NAS Oceana in June 1959, where conversion to the F8U-2 (F-8C) took place. The squadron returned to the MED aboard Forrestal in January 1960 and returned in August. Two more F8U-2 cruises aboard CVA-59 were conducted, one from February until August 1961 and one from August 1962 through March 1963. In the summer of 1963 the F-8Cs were replaced with F-8Es. One deployment was made with the F-8Es from July

VF-103 F8U-1 145322 in 1958. (USN)

1964 until March 1965.

Once back at Oceana VF-103 transitioned to the McDonnell F-4B Phantom and was assigned to CVW-3 aboard the USS Saratoga (CVA-60). The squadron would make eleven deployments aboard Sara with the Phantom. The F-4B was replaced with the F-4J in 1968, which in turn was replaced by the F-4S in 1981 prior to converting to the Grumman F-14A Tomcat of today.

VF-103 F8U-1 launches from the USS Forrestal (CVA-59) on 5-19-59. (USN)



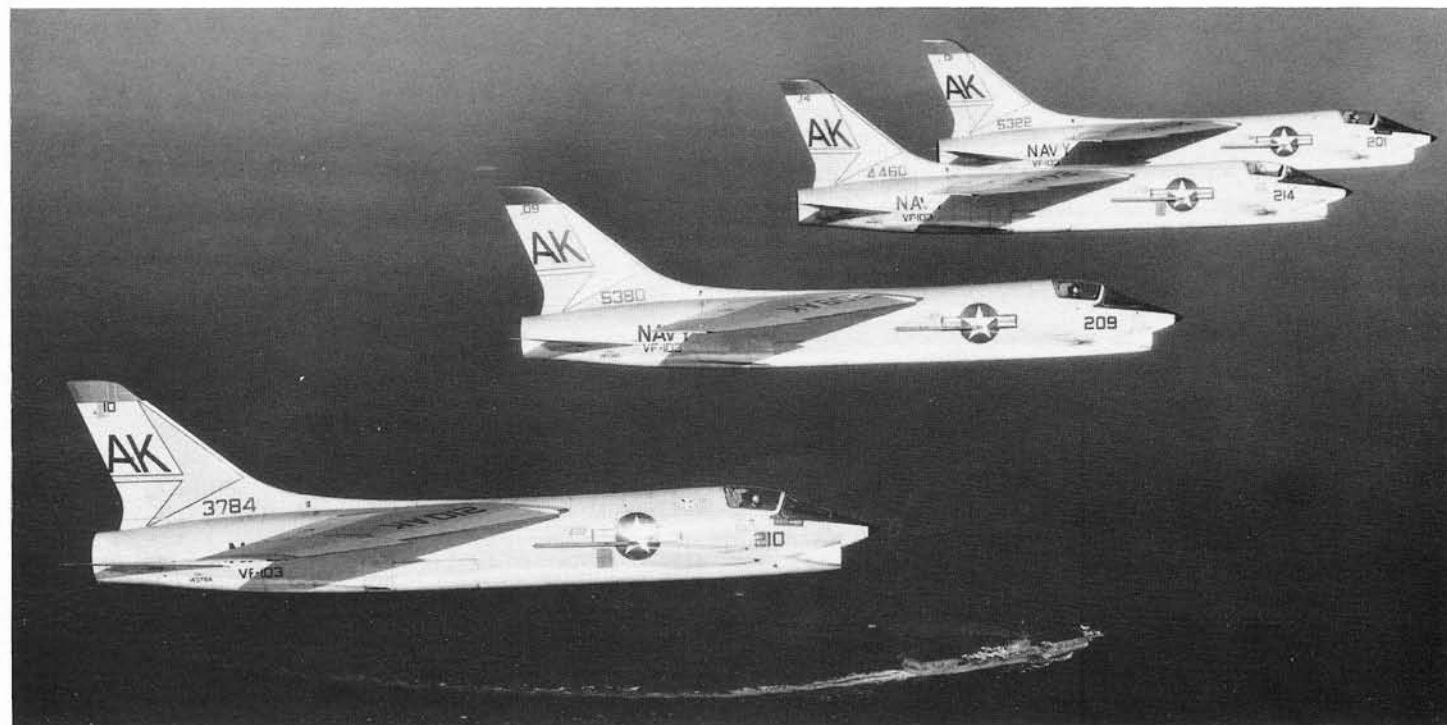


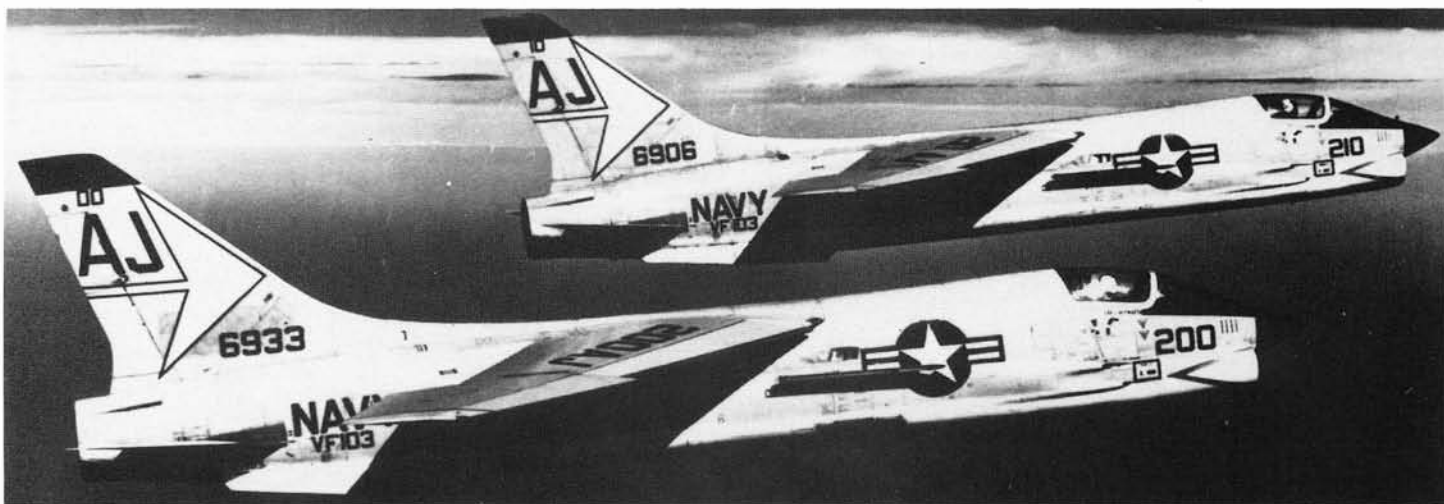
VF-103 F8U-1 144460 in late 1957 shortly after equipping with Crusaders. Wing tip stripes and tail arrow were yellow bordered by black. The Sluggers insignia is painted behind the canopy. (USN/Tailhook VF02359)



Two VF-103 F8U-1s, 144447 (#208) and 144450 (#204), patrolling the Med as part of the force for peace in 1959. The squadron's insignia was painted behind the cockpit. (Vought)

VF-103 F8U-1s; 145322 (#201), 144460 (#214), 145380 (#209), and 143784 (#210) over the Mediterranean and the Forrester on 10-10-58. Arrows on the tail were yellow. (USN)



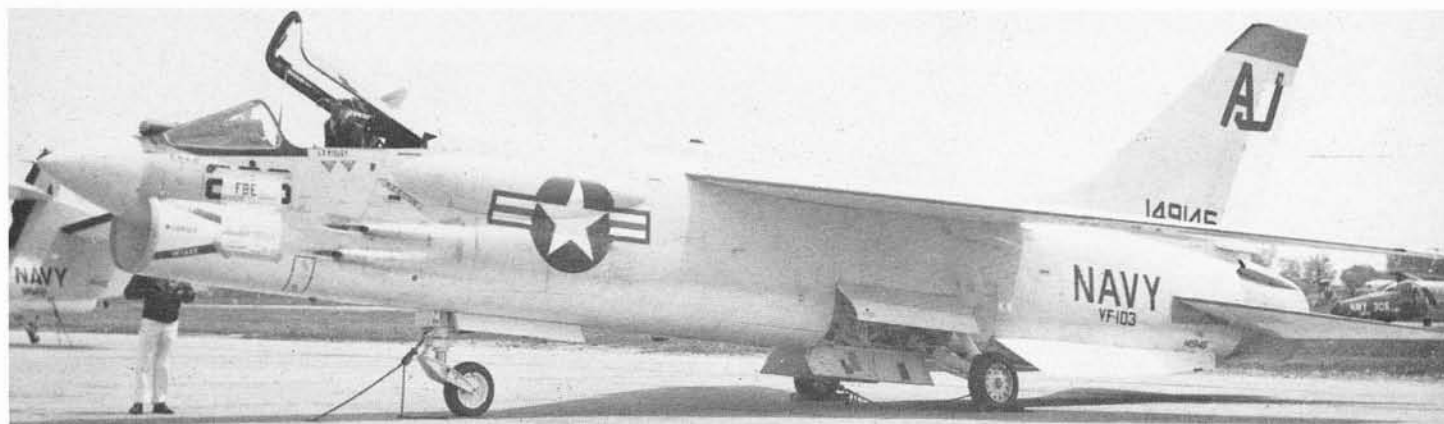


Two VF-103 F8U-2 (F-8C) Crusaders in flight. (Smithsonian Institute)

VF-103 F-8Cs 146909 (#204), 145596 (#207), and 145600 (#206) in flight and venting fuel over NAS Oceana on 6-10-63. (USN)

VF-103 F-8Es 150303 (#201), 150301 (#200), 150310 (#203), and 150305 (#208) in flight during 1965. (USN)

VF-103 F-8E 149145 sans tail arrow. The name LT PIXLEY is painted below the canopy. (Collect-Air Photos)



FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE ONE ONE, VF-111 SUNDOWNERS



VF-111 was originally commissioned as Fighter Squadron Eleven (VF-11) on 10 October 1942 at NAS North Island, California. Two weeks later the squadron was in Hawaii training in their F4F-4 Wildcats. It was while at NAS Maui that the squadron's "Sundowner" insignia was devised. This insignia proved to be prophetic as during the period of April to July 1943, VF-11 shot down fifty-six Japanese aircraft from its Guadalcanal base. VF-11 transitioned to the F6F Hellcat for its second combat tour aboard the USS Hornet (CV-12). When the war ended the Sundowners returned to NAS North Island and transitioned to the F8F-1 Bearcat.

In July 1948 VF-11 was redesignated VF-111. The Sundowners transitioned to F9F-2 Panthers in 1950



and deployed aboard the USS Philippine Sea (CV-47) in July for the first of three Korean War cruises. During their third war cruise, the Sundowners were on hand to fly the final strike of the Korean War on 27 July 1953.

After the war VF-111 transitioned to swept-winged F9F-6 and F9F-8 Cougars, which were replaced by the FJ-3 Fury in June 1957. On 19 January 1959, VF-111 was decommissioned and the next day VA-156, a NAS Moffitt Field based F11F Tiger squadron, was redesignated VF-111. VA-156 adopted the Sundowners nickname and heritage upon the redesignation. The new VF-111 would complete two F11F deployments aboard the USS Shangri-La (CVA-38) and the USS Hancock (CVA-19) between 1959 and 1961.

VF-111 F8U-2N (F-8D) 148638 at NAS Lemoore on 7-8-61. The afterburner section was painted on early F8U-2Ns. (William Swisher)

Upon returning to NAS Miramar in March 1961, VF-111 became the first Navy squadron to re-equip with the F8U-2N (F-8D) Crusader. The F-8Ds deployed twice aboard the USS Kitty Hawk (CVA-63) in 1962 and in 1963-64. The squadron was reassigned to Carrier Air Wing Two (CVW-2) and was redesignated VF-26 (see VF-26) on 1 September 1964. The designation lasted only until 17 September when the squadron reverted back to VF-111.

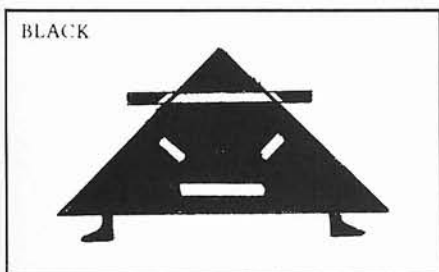
VF-111 F-8Ds 147065 (#102) and 147048 (#104) with unpainted afterburner sections and thin red fin stripe, on 12-18-63 while flying from the Kitty Hawk. (USN)







PHOTOS, PREVIOUS PAGE: VF-111's Commanding Officer's F-8D 148652 landing aboard the USS Kitty Hawk (CVA-63) during the 1962 cruise. Tail stripe was red and fin tip was black. (USN via Barry Miller) VF-111 F-8D 147056 on 12-20-63 with the name LT N. W. COX painted under the canopy rail. (USN) VF-111 F-8Ds 148638 (#111) and 148699 (#114) in March 1964 while over Japan. Red sharkmouths have been added and the speed brakes are fully extended. Note character on fin tip as drawn below. (USN)



VF-111 was flying from the Kitty Hawk when the naval air war in South East Asia turned into a shooting war in 1964. On 6 June a VFP-63 RF-8A from the Kitty Hawk was shot down over Laos and because of this fighter escort was ordered on all future reconnaissance flights. On 7 June VF-111 earned the dubious distinction of losing the first fighter version of the F-8 to hostile fire. The Sundowners commander, CDR Doyle W. Lynn, was shot down over Laos while escorting two VFP-63 RF-8As. CDR Lynn ejected safely 35 miles south of Xieng Khouang and was successfully rescued the next day.

The Sundowners returned to Vietnam in 1965 aboard the USS Midway (CVA-41) as part of CVW-2.

VF-111 F-8D 148647 at NAS Miramar on 9-12-64, sporting the new CVW-2 "NE" tail code and with USS MIDWAY painted on the fuselage side. (Swisher)

CVW-2's "NE" tail code replaced the CVW-11 "NH" tail code used aboard the Kitty Hawk. During the cruise three VF-111 pilots were lost during combat operations. On 8 May CDR L. D. La Haye was lost in F-8D 148637, followed by the squadron's skipper, CDR Lynn on 27 May while flying F-8D 148706. The third pilot was LTJG G. R. Gollahon, who was lost on 12 August in F-8D 147911.

VF-111 F-8D 147908 with sharkmouth and red stripes on the tail, wing tips, and ventral fins on 9-12-64. Pilot's name, LTJG J. E. SHARDY, is painted below the canopy rail. (Swisher)





After returning to Miramar in November, the F-8Ds were slowly replaced by F-8Cs. The F-8Cs were replaced by F-8Es in preparation for the 1966 War cruise aboard the USS Oriskany (CVA-34). The squadron's tail code was changed to "AH" to reflect assignment to CVW-16.

The squadron and the Oriskany

sailed for Vietnam on 26 May 1966 and arrived on station on 11 June. During the cruise three Crusaders were lost in combat over North Vietnam. F-8E 150880 was lost to AAA on 11 August and the pilot LTJG C. A. Balisteri was recovered. On 13 August LCDR N. S. Levy was recovered after losing 150866 to AAA. A MiG claimed 150896 on 5 September and CAPT W.

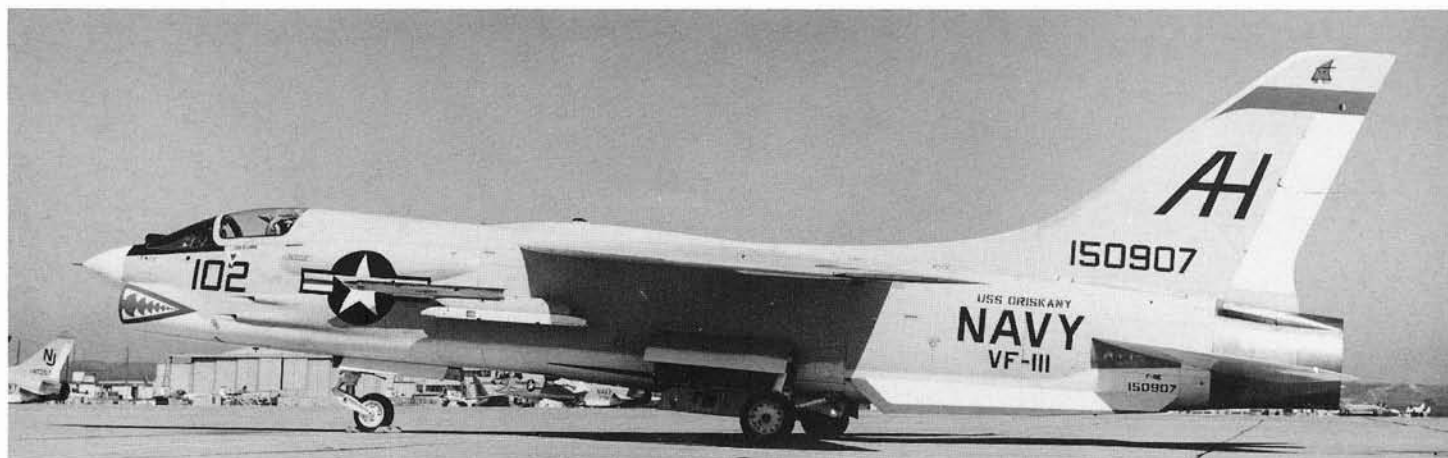
VF-111 F-8D 147062 forms up with a VAH-8 Skywarrior tanker off the coast of Vietnam on 6-15-63. (USN)

K. Abbott became a POW. The squadron returned to Miramar on 16 November and commenced turn-around training for their 1967 cruise.

VF-111 F-8D 147072 with CVW-16's "AH" tail code on 2-19-66. Tail and wing stripes were red. (Clay Jansson)

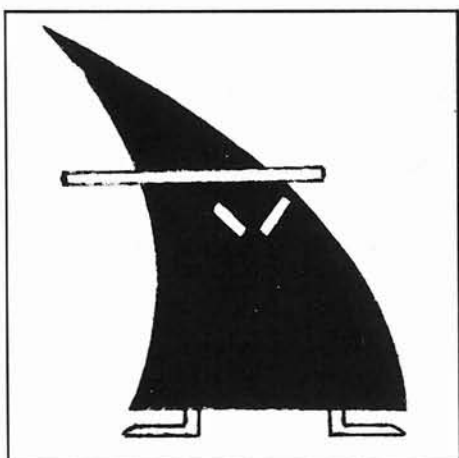


VF-111 F-8C 150907 at NAS Miramar on 2-19-66, prior to the 1966 USS Oriskany cruise. Air Wing Sixteen's "AH" tail code and USS Oriskany have been added. The name "CDR R. COOK" is painted under the canopy rail. (Clay Jansson)





VF-111 F-8E 149185 at NAS Lemoore on 5-1-66. Character on tail was known as "Omar" (see drawing below). Pilots name printed below the canopy rail was LCDR PETE PETERS. (Swisher)



Once back at Miramar, the squadron once again received F-8Cs. On 11 May 1967, VF-111's Detachment

VF-111 F-8E 149180 landing at NAS Atsugi on 8-11-66. (T. Matsuzaki)

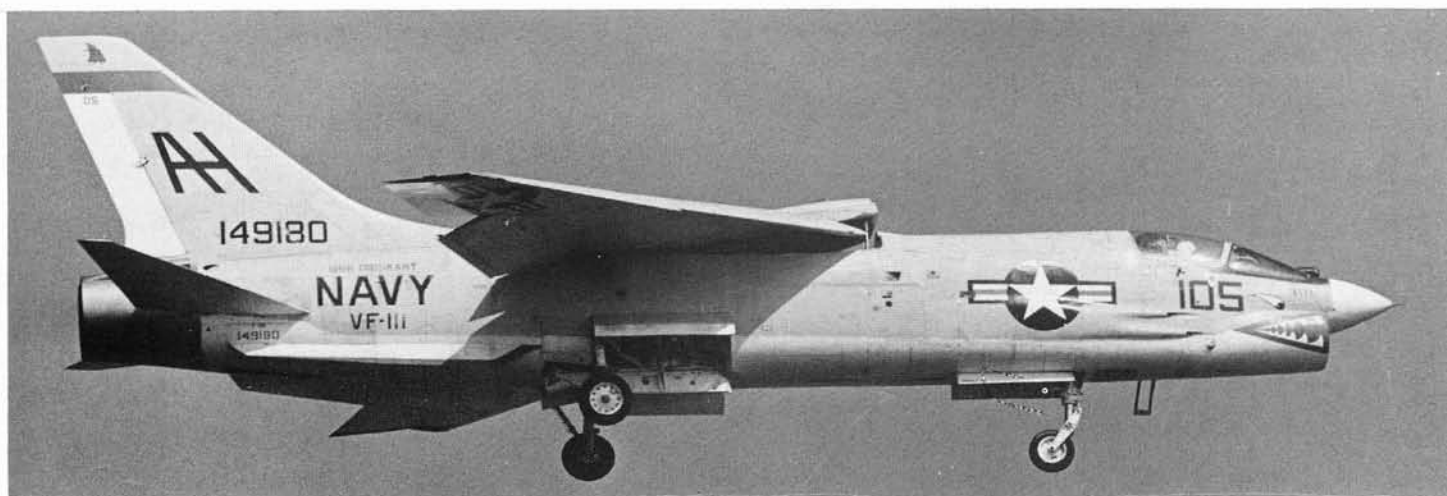
11 known as "Omars Orphans" deployed aboard the USS Intrepid (CVS-11) on that carrier's second war cruise. The anti-submarine carrier Intrepid was being operated as a light attack carrier, and after its first Vietnam cruise, the fighter detachment was assigned to provide CVW-10 with its own escorts. With DET 11, VF-111 received its third tail code "AK". During the cruise, which ended on 30 December 1967, VF-111 lost one aircraft (146993) to AAA fire over the north on 12 August, with the pilot LCDR F. S. Teague being recovered.

The Sundowners' second Oriskany War cruise which started on 16 June 1967 proved to be extremely costly for CVW-16. The carrier lost 29 aircraft during combat and another 10 to operational problems. VF-111 proved to be lucky by losing only 4 aircraft. AAA claimed 146938 on 10-5-67 and 146907 on 12-5-67. Operational accidents claimed 146929 on 9-8-67 and 147004 on 11-19-67.

The squadron returned to Miramar on 31 January 1968.

Omars Orphans deployed aboard Intrepid again on 4 June 1968. It was during this cruise that the Sundowners would claim their only MiG kill. On 19 September, LT Anthony Nargi encountered a MiG-21 during a MiG CAP mission. He subsequently downed the MiG-21 with a AIM-9 Sidewinder for VF-111's 160th. kill. This kill was recorded on LT Nargi's 111th. mission while flying F-8C 146961. The detachment returned home on 8 February 1969.

VF-111's Oriskany based aircraft were converted to the remanufactured "H" model in preparation for the 1969 cruise aboard the USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14). The Sundowners left for Vietnam on 1 February 1969 and arrived on station on 18 February. This deployment proved to be relatively uneventful for the squadron with only one operational loss on 7-6-69.





VF-111's only MiG killer, F-8C 146961 on 5-24-68 at NAS Miramar, ten days prior to departing on its MiG killing cruise. The aircraft was the mount of LT JOE THOMPSON and had TIGER painted in white on the red tail stripe. LT ANTHONY NARGI would be flying her on 9-19-68 when he would use a AIM-9 Sidewinder to down a MiG-21. (Clay Jansson)



VF-111 Detachment 11 (Omar's Orphans) F-8C 146911 on 5-24-68. The red tail, wing, and ventral fin stripes were bordered by black and the Rising Sun motif has been added to the rudder. The name "ROADRUNNER" has been added to the tail stripe. (Clay Jansson)

VF-111 F-8C traps aboard the USS Intrepid (CVS-11) in September 1968 while operating in the Gulf of Tonkin. The raised wing's bulkhead was red and the aircraft was typically armed with two Sidewinders. (USN via Barry Miller)





CDR JOE FINNEY's F-8C on 5-24-68. (Jansson) F-8C 147022 on 7-27-68. (Jansson) VF-111 F-8H 148636 taxiing forward on the Ticonderoga in 1969. This aircraft was lost during an operational accident on 7-6-69. SUNDOWNERS was painted in white on the red wing bulkhead. (Dom Hayes) F-8H 148661 which was flown by LT CARL STATTIN on 1-28-69. The "AH" tail code was bordered in white. (Harry Gann)





CVW-16 returned to Miramar on 18 September 1969 and was reassigned to CVW-8 aboard the USS Shangri-La (CVS-38). The Shang, another anti-sub carrier from the Atlantic Fleet which was loaned to the Pacific Fleet as a light attack carrier left Mayport, Florida, on 5 March 1970.

CVW-8's "AJ" tail code became the squadron's fifth tail code. When the squadron returned home on 17 December 1970, they had flown over 12,500 missions over Vietnam and were awarded the Navy Unit Commendation and the Meritorious Unit Citation.

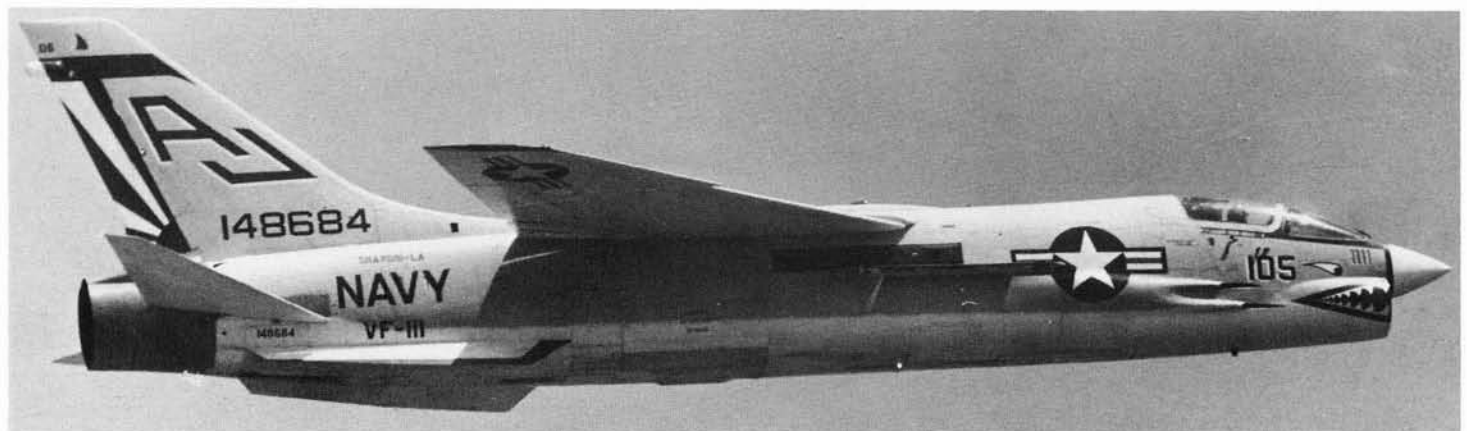
VF-111 F-8H 148652 on 3-14-70 with CVW-8's "AJ" tail code. The name LCDR BLACKJACK FINLEY was painted under the canopy rail. (Clay Jansson)

In 1971 the F-8H Crusaders were replaced by F-4B Phantoms which in turn were replaced by the F-14A Tomcat in April 1977.



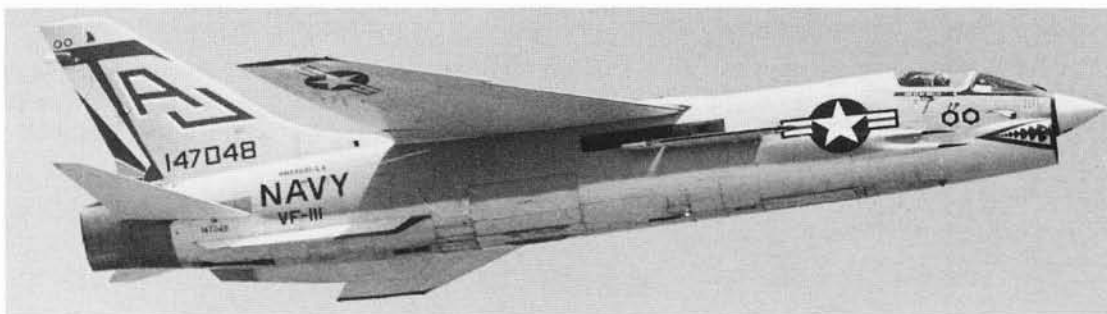
CDR BILL RENNIE's F-8H 147909 on 3-19-70. (Clay Jansson)

VF-111 F-8H 148684 over Atsugi on 7-24-70. (T. Matsuzaki)

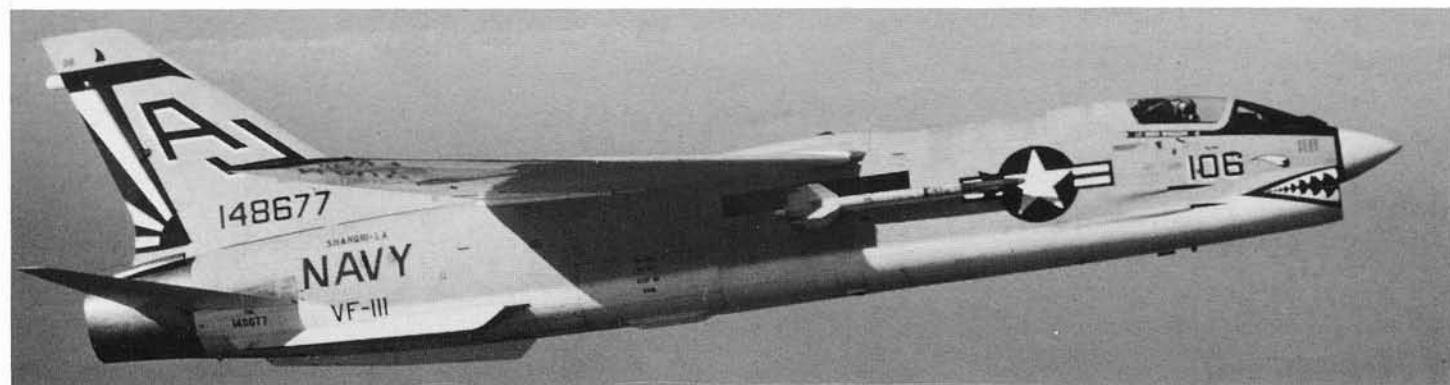




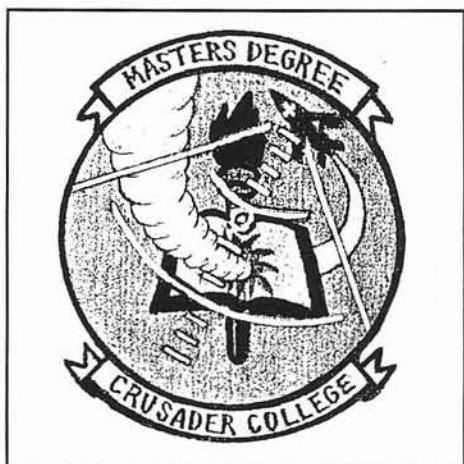
VF-111 F-8H 147048, CAG BIRD, on 3-14-70 prior to the Sundowners' last F-8 cruise. The rising sun rudder markings were red, yellow, green, orange, and blue. (Clay Jansson) 147048 during cruise while over NAS Atsugi on 7-24-70. (T. Matsuzaki)



F-8H 147055 belonging to LT CHUCK SCOTT at Da Nang in 1970. F-8H 148677 in June 1970; see the back cover. (Barry Miller)



FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE TWO FOUR, VF-124 CRUSADER COLLEGE



commissioned on 16 August 1948. Stationed at NAS Moffett Field, California, the squadron became responsible for training replacement F-8 pilots. Also commissioned on that date was Replacement Carrier Air Group Twelve (RCVG-12), which VF-124 was assigned to. Under this new organization the squadrons like VF-124 were affectionately referred to as the RAG (Replacement Air Group), or in this case the F-8 RAG.

On 30 June 1961 the squadron transferred to NAS Miramar, California, home of all Pacific Fleet fighter squadrons. Known as the Crusader College during its F-8 years, VF-124's organization and responsibilities in-

creased greatly due to the need for replacement F-8 pilots for the Vietnam War. In 1970 the RCVGs were disbanded and VF-124 fell under the direct command of the Commander Fighter Airborne Early Warning Wing Pacific Fleet. With the introduction of the F-14A Tomcat and the dwindling need for F-8 fighter pilots, VF-124 turned over the RAG duties to VFP-63 (see VFP-63) and VF-124 became the F-14 RAG.

One of the first VF-124 aircraft was this ex VF-154 F8U-1 143707. The fuselage and tail markings are that of VF-154 and only the squadron designation was changed to VF-124. This May 1958 photo was taken while VF-154 was on its first F8U-1 deployment. (W. T. Larkins)

VF-124 came into being when on 11 April 1958 VF-53 was redesignated VF-124. VF-53 had originally been



VF-124 F8U-1 143737 on 5-17-58 at Moffett Field. Tail markings were international orange with black stripes and stars. (Larkins)





VF-124 F8U-1 145425 at NAS Oakland on 9-6-59. The gear are now painted white and the tail is international orange with white bordering the "NJ" and stars. A blue practice Sidewinder was mounted on the fuselage side. (William T. Larkins)



VF-124 F8U-1E (F-8B) 145442 at MCAS Yuma on 3-19-60. Note the gunpowder stains on the forward fuselage from continuous gunnery training. (William Swisher)

VF-124 F8U-1 144443 at MCAS Yuma on 12-3-59. Squadron tail markings were missing and the afterburner section was painted. (William Swisher)





Three VF-124 F8U-1s; 145422 (412), 145424 (416), and 145391 (425) returning to NAS Moffett Field on 5-21-60. These photos show the location and shape of the upper and lower international orange wing markings. (William T. Larkins)





VF-124 F8U-1 143714 at NAS Miramar on 4-8-62. Tail markings were international orange with a black "NJ" bordered by white. Note the extended Ram Air Turbine (RAT) and the raised wing. (William Swisher)



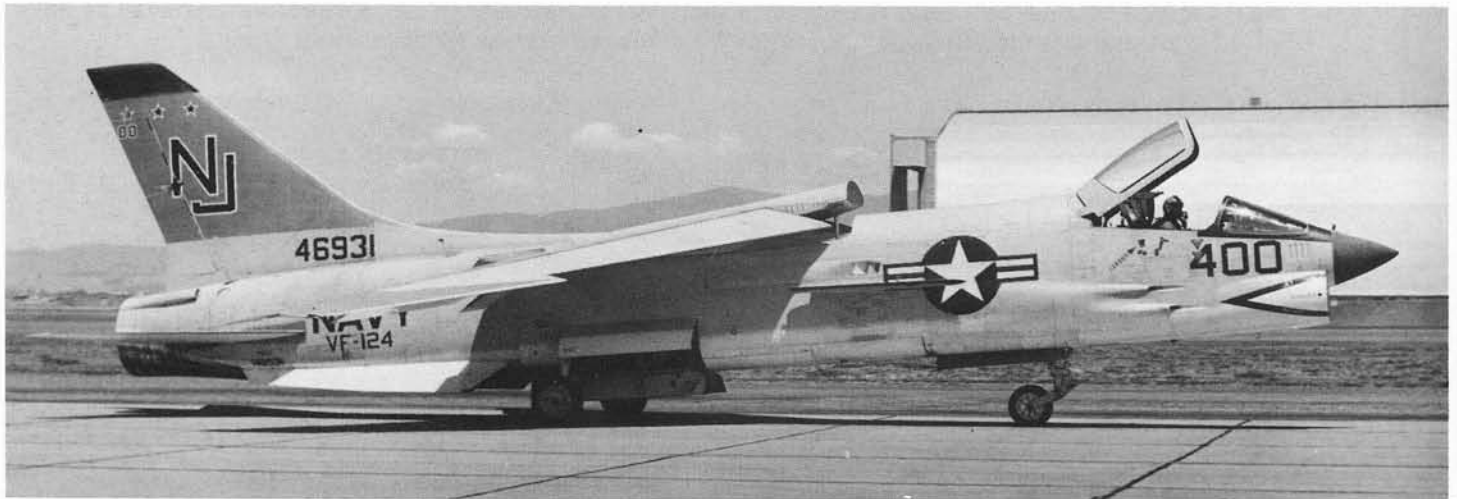
VF-124 F8U-2 (F-8C) 47003 at NAS Moffett Field. The first VF-124 F8U-2 was acquired in 1959. (William T. Larkins)

VF-124 F-8A 145400 at NAS Miramar on 1-19-63. Note locations of wing codes and outer wing markings. (Clay Jansson)





VF-124 F8U-2 145567 at NAS Moffitt Field on 7-25-59. Outer wing panel flashes and the tail were international orange and the fin tip and the radome were black. Notice the tied-on canvas exhaust covers. (William T. Larkins)



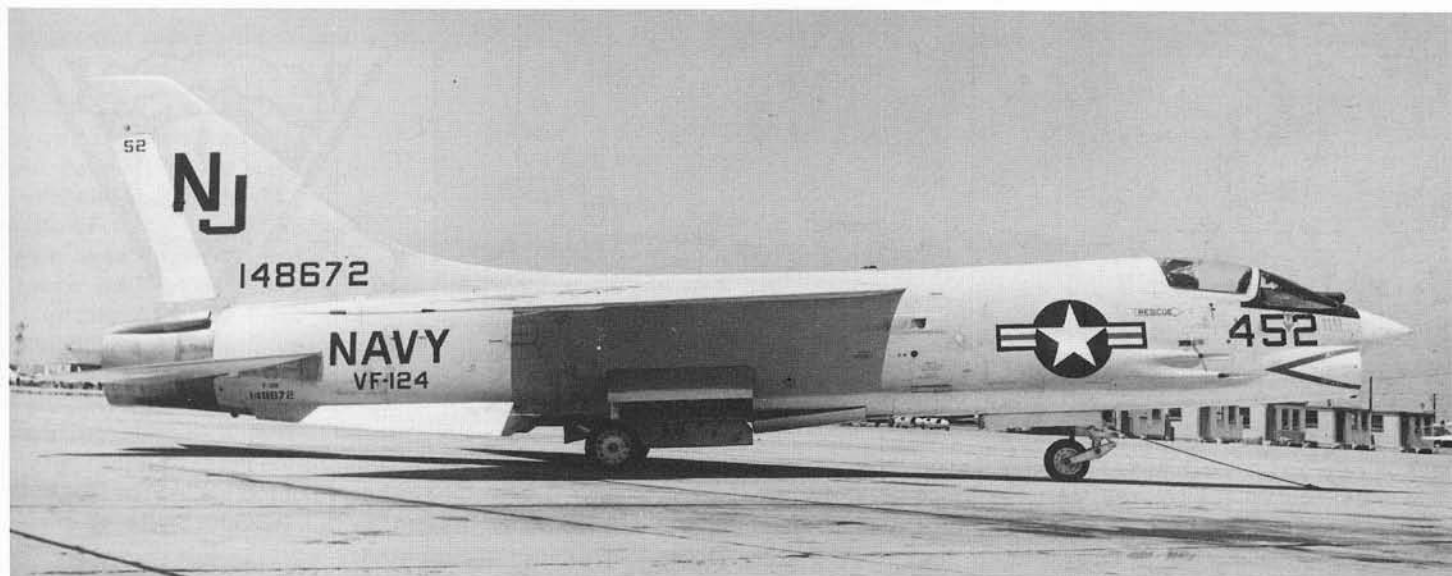
VF-124 F8U-2 145570 at NAS Moffett Field on 5-16-59 with the Ram Air Turbine (RAT) extended. (William T. Larkins)

VF-124 F8U-2 146931 taxiing with raised wing at NAS Moffett Field on 5-21-60. (William T. Larkins)



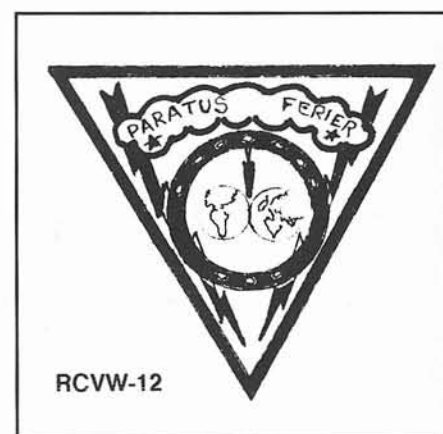


By 1964 The Crusader College was operating F-8C, F-8D, and F-8E Crusaders as seen in these photos taken on 8-1-64. All aircraft no longer carried the international orange trim. F-8C 146990 (432), F-8D 148672 (452), and F-8E 150861 (405). (Jansson)





In-flight photo of four VF-124 Crusaders over Southern California with CAG-12's aircraft, F-8E 150903, in the foreground on 10-20-65. Insignia on the tail was that of RCVW-12. (USN) Below, CAG-12's aircraft being washed. (William Swisher)



15903 as it appeared in 1969 with all of Replacement Carrier Air Wing Twelve's (RCVW-12) squadron insignias on the rudder. Top to bottom; VF-121, VA-122, VAH-123, VF-124, VA-125, VF-126, and VA-127. The world has been painted behind the RCVW-12 insignia on the tail. The CAG's name, CAPT ED HOLLEY, was painted below the canopy rail. (William Swisher)





VF-124 F-8E 150683 prepares to launch from the port catapult of the USS Constellation (CVA-64), while VF-124 F-8D 147055 taxis into position for launch on the starboard catapult. At left, F-8D 147055 lifts off the Constellation's deck. Below, F-8D 147905 launches from the starboard catapult of the Connie. (Vought / Schoeni)

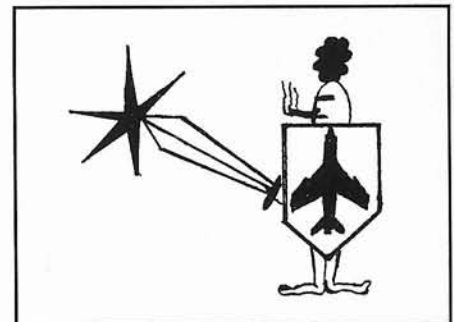




VF-124 F-8H 147047 in 1971 with red stripes and a black Crusader character drawing with a red shield on the tail. Note wing pylon and the pilot's name LT JACK MUSITANO was written under the canopy rail. (Clay Jansson)



VF-124 F-8J 149222 in 1971. (Burger)



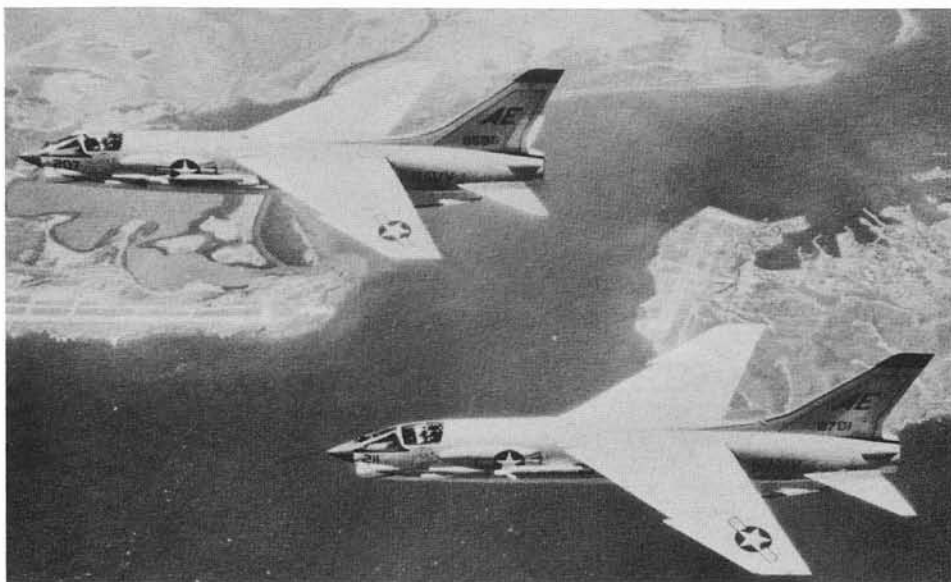
VF-124 F-8E 150872 launches from the port catapult of the USS Independence (CVA-62). (Vought)



FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE THREE TWO, VF-132 PEG LEG PETES



VF-132 F8U-2Ns 148696 (207) and 148701 (211) over NAS Leeward Point during the Connie's shakedown cruise.



On 21 August 1961 the Peg Leg Petes of VF-132 were recommissioned as a component of the newly commissioned Carrier Air Group Thirteen (CVG-13) at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, flying the new supersonic F8U-2N (F-8D) Crusader.

On 13 February 1962 the squadron boarded the USS Independence (CVA-62) for two weeks of day and night carrier qualifications. Shunning conventional survival equipment the pilots flew every flight in the Navy's full pressure suit, becoming the first squadron ever to carrier qualify at night thus equipped. During this cruise the squadron logged 287 traps, 96 of which were at night. After returning to Cecil Field, the Peg Leg Petes commenced preparations for the shakedown cruise of the USS Constellation (CVA-64). During this period the squadron participated in a 48 hour

NORAD exercise. Scoring more authenticated kills than any other Navy squadron in the exercise, the officers and men received the highest praise from the Commanding General of the 32nd. NORAD sector.

On 3 March 1962 VF-132 loaded aboard the Constellation for its two month shakedown cruise. While operating ashore at NAS Leeward Point, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the squadron completed two weeks of gunnery practice by recording the highest banner score yet in a F8U-2N. After the two weeks ashore, VF-132 resumed shipboard day and night carrier operations in preparation for the Connie's Operational Readiness Inspection by Fleet Training Group, Guantanamo.

Two mishaps occurred in April. On the 25th. LT Robert R. Loomis struck the ramp during a night carrier

approach, damaging the landing gear and tail section. He crashlanded at NAS Leeward Point without injury. Then on the 30th, CDR George C. Watkins, CAG-13, ejected immediately after a night bolter in which the aircraft had been damaged. He was rescued uninjured by the plane guard destroyer.

After supporting the Connie in its successful ORI, VF-132 flew ashore to NAS Cecil Field on 5 May 1962. In June during preparations for CVG-13's South American cruise VF-132 received official notice of impending decommissioning. In September the aircraft and personnel were transferred to other units. On 1 October 1962, VF-132 was decommissioned.

CDR JAY ARNOLD's F8U-2N 148680; tail markings were yellow bordered by black. Note Peg Leg Pete on fuselage.



FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE FOUR ONE, VF-141 IRON ANGELS



The Iron Angels roots and insignia can be traced back to Fighter Squadron Fourteen (VF-14) which was commissioned on 23 August 1943 at NAS Atlantic City as a component of Carrier Air Group Fourteen. Flying Grumman F6F Hellcats, VF-14 took part in the naval battles for Tinian, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Guam, Palau, Okinawa, Leyte, and the second battle of the Philippine Sea. The Iron Angels returned to San Diego in November 1944 with nine Aces. The squadron was decommissioned on 14 June 1946.

When the Korean War broke out, many Naval Air Reserve squadrons were recalled to active duty. One of these, VF-721, was aboard the USS Boxer (CVA-21) as a component of



Carrier Air Group Fourteen in March 1953 when it was redesignated VF-141. The new VF-141 adopted the Iron Angel insignia of World War II fame. While flying the Grumman F9F-2 Panther, the squadron made a second Korean deployment aboard the USS Kearsarge (CVA-33).

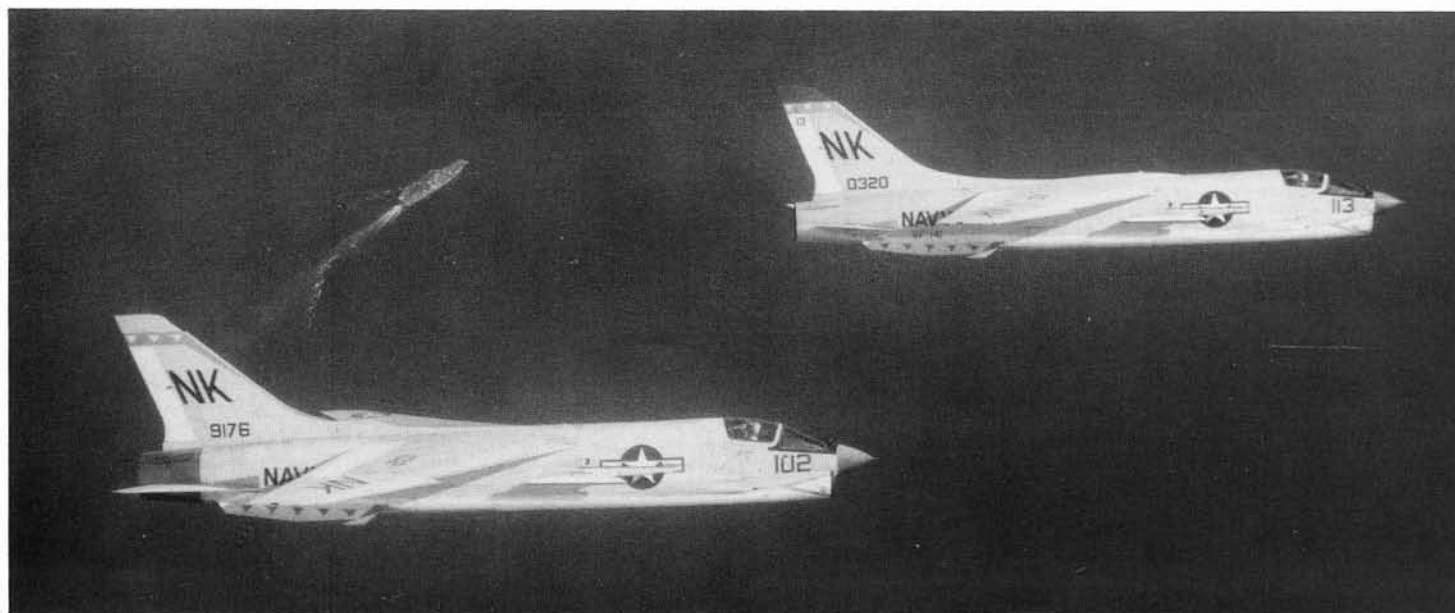
Upon returning to Miramar, the Iron Angels transitioned to the McDonnell F2H-3 Banshee in late 1953. The squadron stepped up to the Douglas F4D-1 Skyray in 1956 and the McDonnell F3H-2 Demon in 1959.

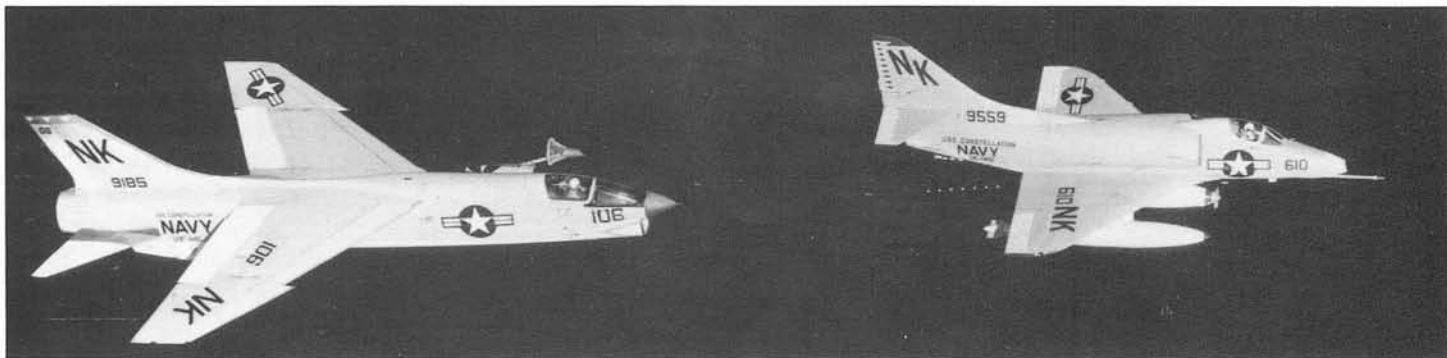
In May 1962 the Demons were replaced with the F-8E Crusader. The transition to the 1,000+MPH Crusaders was quick and orderly. VF-141 took to sea aboard the USS Constel-

VF-141 F8U-2NE (F-8E) 149180 at NAS Miramar on 1-19-63. Tail stripe and ventral fin markings were red and afterburner section was painted. (Jansson)

lation (CVA-64) in February 1963. 93 flying days with 1190 carrier landings, of which 314 were at night, ended when VF-141 returned home on 10 September 1963. The squadron also participated in a firepower demonstration on 25 July for president Chaing Kai Chek and was awarded the CNO Safety Award for 1963. On 15 October 1963 VF-141 was redesignated VF-53 when it was assigned to Carrier Air Wing Five (see VF-53).

VF-141 F-8Es 149176 (#102) and 150320 (#113) over the USS Constellation (CVA-64) on 5-17-63. (USN)





VF-141 F-8E 149185 refueling from VA-146 A-4C 149559 in November 1962. Note the locations of the wing codes. (USN via Miller)



Air Wing Fourteen; VAW-11 E-1B, VA-145 A-1s, VA-146 A-4Cs, VF-143 F-4B, VAH-10 A-3B, and VF-141 F-8E. (Tailhook)

Four F-8Es 150318 (#112), 149187 (#107), 149176 (#102), and 150335 (#114) over the Constellation on 6-20-63. (USN)



FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE FOUR TWO, VF-142 FIGHTING FALCONS



VF-142 was originally established as VF-791 at NARTU Memphis, Tennessee, on 1 November 1949. The squadron flew F6F-5 Hellcats as one of 128 fighter units of the Naval Air Reserve. With the advent of the Korean War VF-791 was one of eight fighter squadrons called to active duty on 20 July 1950.

Equipped with F4U-4 Corsairs VF-791 deployed to Korea on 2 March 1951 aboard the USS Boxer (CV-21) as a component of Reserve Air Group 101 (CVG-101). After returning to the United States on 24 October VF-791 became the first AIRPAC squadron to receive F9F-5 Panthers in April 1952.

On 4 February 1953, VF-791 and CVG-101 were redesignated VF-142 and CVG-14 respectively. After only

thirteen months in the Panther and with no deployments in the type, VF-142 upgraded its mounts to F9F-6 Cougars in May. It was during this time that the name Fighting Falcons was selected. Two cruises were made with Cougars. One MED cruise aboard the USS Randolph (CVA-15) from 3 February to 4 August 1954 and one WESTPAC cruise aboard the USS Boxer (CVA-21).

In March 1956 the Cougars were replaced by FJ-3 Furys and one deployment from 21 January until 25 July 1957 was made aboard the USS Hornet (CVA-12). Upon returning to NAS Miramar, VF-142 became the second AIRPAC line fighter squadron and the first Miramar based squadron to equip with the Chance Vought F8U-1 in September 1957.

The Fighting Falcons spent most of 1958 ashore, evaluating new high-altitude pressure suits and working with the USAF NORAD Command on air defense intercept exercises. During carrier qualifications aboard the Midway on 12 March, LTJG G. M. Lindsay lost VF-142's first F8U-1 (143744) during a ramp strike. Assigned to the USS Ranger (CVA-61) VF-142 deployed on 3 January 1959 where it was the first AIRPAC Crusader squadron to operate from a Forrestal class carrier. Following five

weeks of combat training near Hawaii the squadron received the highest grade in CVG-14 during the ORI. During the cruise which ended on 27 July, numerous air power demonstrations were conducted, along with armed CAP flights in the Formosa Straits.

In September 1959 the F8U-2 replaced the F8U-1 and the squadron took the improved Crusader to the fourth annual TOPGUN Weapons Meet at MCAAS Yuma. The second F-8 deployment commenced on 14 May 1960 aboard the USS Oriskany (CVA-34). On 30 June, VF-142 became the first F-8 squadron to successfully complete an accident-free fiscal year. In addition, the coveted AIRPAC Battle Efficiency "E" Award was bestowed upon VF-142 as the outstanding day fighter squadron. This deployment ended on 15 December and VF-142 immediately left for the 1960 TOPGUN Weapons Meet at MCAS Yuma.

In June 1961, VF-142 swapped their F8U-2s for VMF-323's F8U-1s and in July joined CVG-11. On 11 August they boarded the USS Kitty Hawk (CVA-63) as she departed Norfolk, Virginia, for her shakedown cruise to San Diego.

Early 1958 photo of VF-142 F8U-1s 143739 (#104) and 143764 (#102). Fuselage arrow and tail markings were red.



Red tailed VF-142 F8U-1 143761 on final in 1958. (USN) VF-142 F8U-1 (F-8A) 145318 aboard the Ranger on 9-23-58. (USN) VF-142 F8U-2 146907 at the Yuma TOPGUN meet on 12-3-59. Markings were changed to a small red tail stripe under the fin cap. Note powder stains on the fuselage. (Swisher)

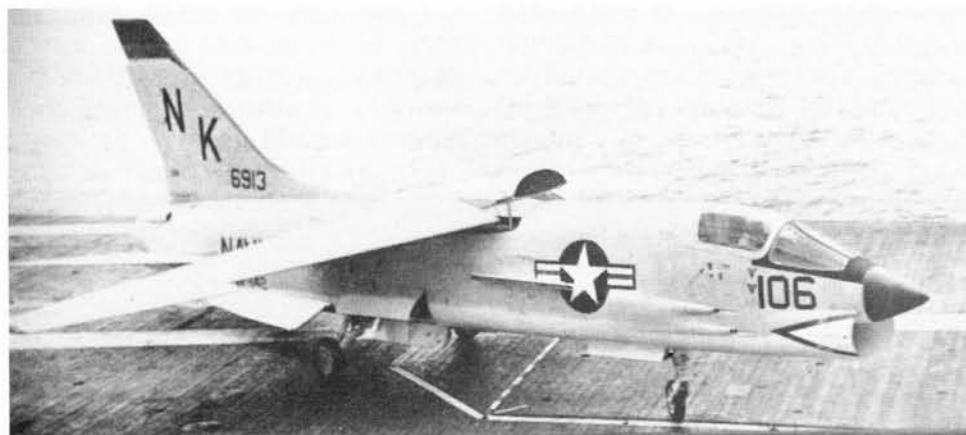
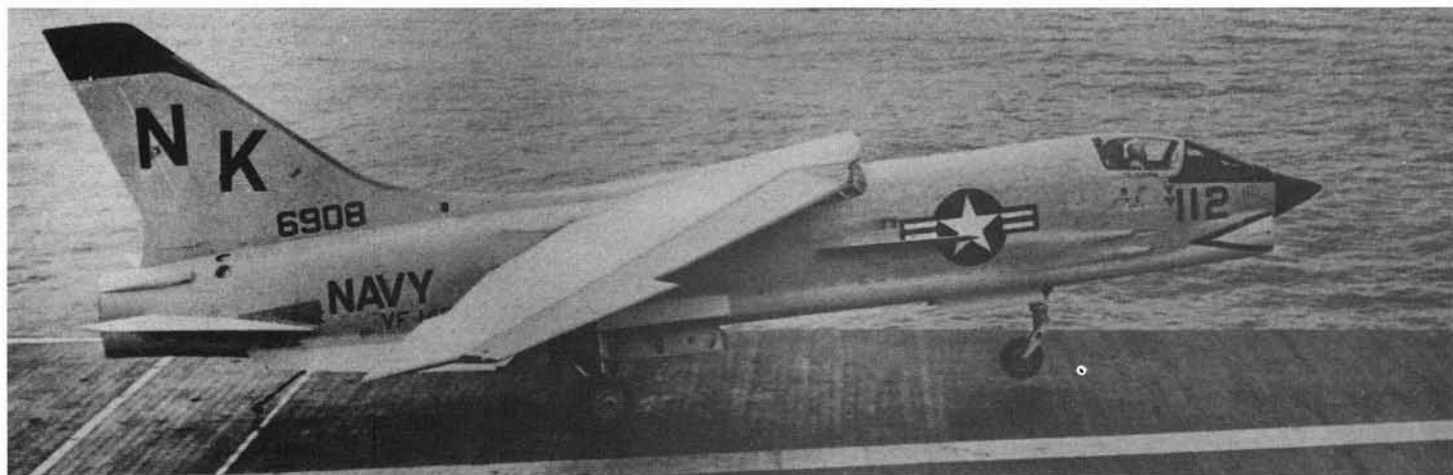


Upon returning to Miramar, the F-8 pilots were transferred to the newly established VF-132. VF-142 was then assigned to RCVG-12 for transition training in the F4H-1 Phan-

tom. Upon completion of conversion training, the Fighting Falcons of VF-142 was assigned to CVG-9 in April and on 1 June was redesignated VF-96.

The squadron would down ten MiGs and make eight combat cruises plus two peacetime cruises with the F-4 prior to disestablishment on 1 November 1975.





VF-142 F8U-2 (F-8C) 146908 touches down aboard the USS Oriskany (CVA-34) in 1960. The afterburner section was painted and the only markings were a thin red stripe below the black fin cap. (USN) VF-142 F8U-2 146913 taxis forward on the "Big O" in 1960. (USN) VF-142 F8U-2s 146922 (#114), 146907 (#110), and 146924 (#107) on the flight line at MCAS Yuma for the December 1960 TOPGUN weapons meet. (S. Krause) F8U-2 145567 with a yellow tail stripe and the Battle "E" Award on the tail on 2-13-61. (USN)



FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE FIVE FOUR, VF-154 GRAND SLAMMERS / BLACK KNIGHTS

The roots of VF-154 can be traced back to VBF-718, a Naval Air Reserve squadron which was established at NAS New York on 1 July 1946. The squadron was redesignated VF-68A on 1 February 1947 and VF-837 on 1 December 1949.

The Korean War caused the Navy to recall 42 reserve squadrons by May 1951 with VF-837 being called to active duty on 1 February 1951. VF-837 made one War cruise aboard the USS Antietam (CV-36) as part of Carrier Air Group Fifteen (CVG-15) and was redesignated VF-154 on 4 February 1953 when CVG-15 and its squadrons were augmented into the regular Navy. February 4th. also marked the start of two Korean War deployments aboard the USS Princeton (CVA-37).

Black Knight insignia designed by LTJG John Miottel and drawn by Milton Caniff, creator of Steve Canyon, is discussed by (left to right) LTJG John Miottel, LCDR R. B. Baldwin, and LTJG Carl Madson. (via Miottel) VF-154 flightline at Moffett in 1957, pilot is in a full pressure suit. (via John Miottel)





While at NAS New York, the squadron flew F6F-5 Hellcats, F4U-4 / FG-1D Corsairs and FH-1 Phantoms. As VF-837, the squadron transitioned to Grumman F9F-2 Panthers for its Antietam deployment and then changed to F9F-5 Panthers for its deployments aboard Princeton as VF-154.

VF-154 returned to NAS Moffett Field on 31 February 1955 and transitioned to the North American FJ-3 Fury in July. In the spring of 1957 the FJ-3s were replaced by the Chance Vought F8U-1 Crusader. This gave the squadron the distinction of being the first operational Pacific Fleet F8U squadron. VF-154 would fly various models of the Crusader until replaced by the McDonnell F-4B Phantom in November 1965. Various models of the Phantom were flown until November 1983 when the Black Knights transitioned to the Grumman F-14A Tomcat.

VF-154's first deployment of the Crusader was to NAAS Fallon, Nevada, for weapons training. This was followed by the first NAVAIRPAC Sidewinder firings at NAS Miramar. This was followed by another trip to

Fallon in September and the Navy's first carrier qualifications by an operational squadron on 18 November 1957. The November carquals were conducted aboard the USS Hancock (CVA-19), and were repeated in December.

Shortly after the arrival of the Crusader, a squadron-wide competition for a more appropriate squadron insignia was announced. The winning design was submitted by LTJG J. Miottel and was forwarded to the Chief of Naval Operations for approval. Approval was granted and the squadron's new insignia was released to the press in December 1957. The squadron continued to be known as the Grand Slammers until the name Black Knights was added to the top of their insignia in 1963.

VF-154 left its home base at NAS Moffett Field, California, for deployment to Japan aboard the Hancock on 16 February 1958. During this cruise, which ended on 3 October 1958, the F8U would be plagued by teething problems in the form of gear and tail hook failures. Two aircraft were lost on 4 March while the Hancock was operating off of Oahu. LTJG C. F. Ramsey

VF-154 F8U-1 Crusaders at NAAS Fallon in September 1957. Only two of the aircraft were wearing the squadron's distinctive orange lighting bolts. (John Miottel)

lost one of his landing gears and was killed during his ejection. Then LTJG John Miottel had to take the barricade due to a failed arresting hook. Unfortunately the barricade tore off the port landing gear and the aircraft went over the side. Luckily the pilot escaped as it hit the water.

Between March and June, five more mishaps, mainly attributable to gear and hook problems occurred. One of these, on 20 June, was LTJG Miottel taking the barricade for the second time, to become the only Crusader pilot to thus do so. Because of these reoccurring problems, F8U operations were only conducted within bingo field distances. By the time the cruise ended all of VF-154's Crusaders had been reworked to eliminate further gear and hook failures.

VF-154 F8U-1 143720 in 1957. The lighting bolts on the fuselage and the tail were orange bordered by black. The landing gear on the early F8Us were natural metal. (George Thomas via Clay Jansson)

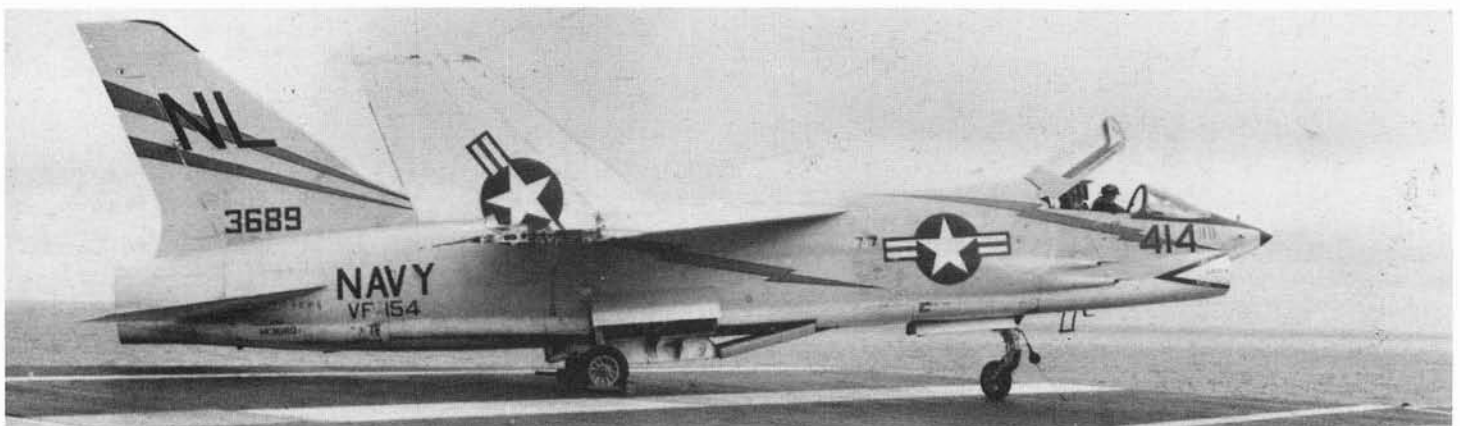


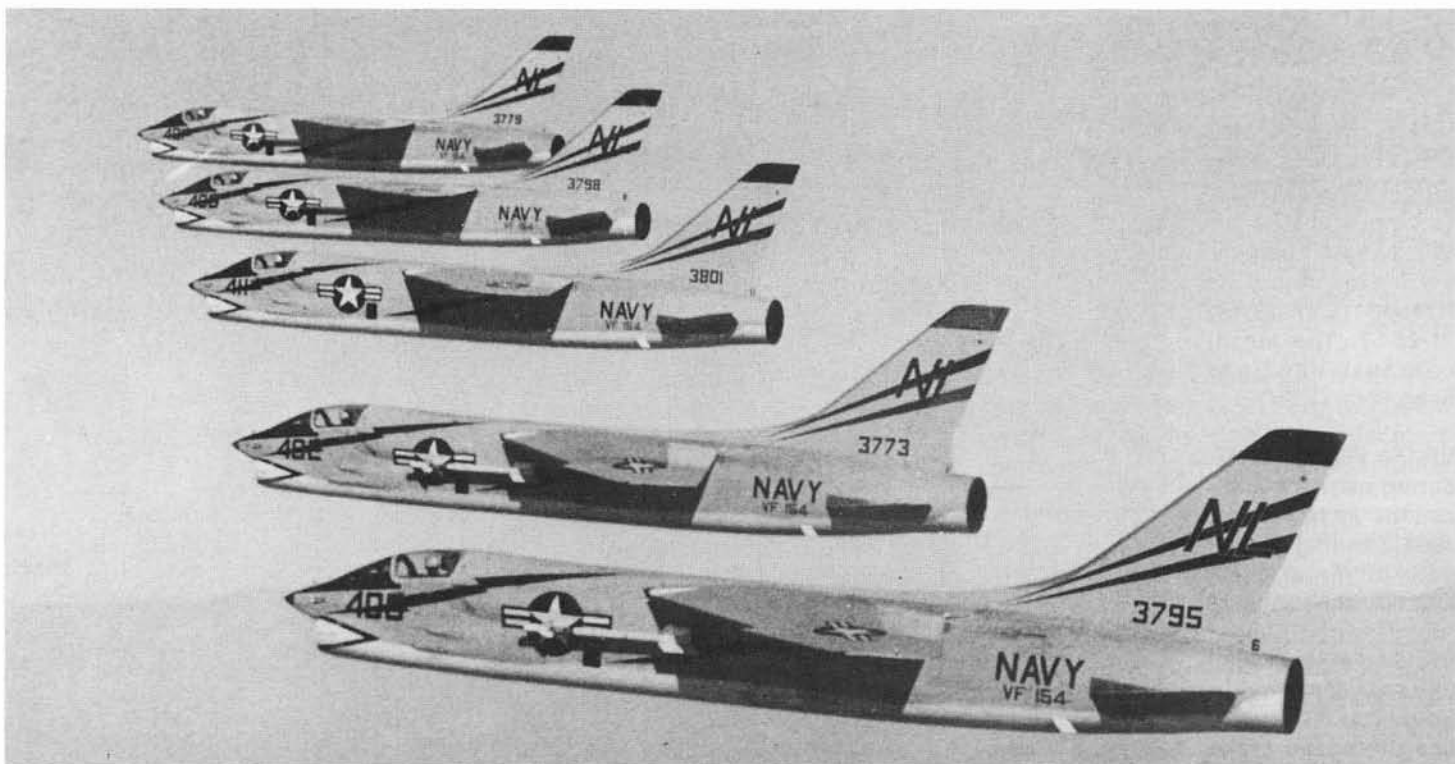
**VF-154, FIRST
FLEET OPER-
ATIONAL CRU-
SADER SQUA-
DRON TO CAR-
RIER QUALIFY.**

VF-154 F8U-1 launch-
es from the USS
Hancock (CVA-19) on
11-25-57. The steam
catapult has just
been fired. (USN)

VF-154 F8U-1 143697
during carrier qualifi-
cations in November
1957. Landing gear is
natural metal. (Na-
tional Archives)

VF-154 F8U-1 143689
aboard Hancock in
November 1957. No-
tice the speed brake
was slightly open.
(National Archives)





The squadron redeployed aboard Hancock from 1 August 1959 until 18 January 1960 with the improved F8U-1E. No further gear or hook problems were experienced during this cruise.

VF-154 would deploy four more times with the F-8, all aboard the USS Coral Sea (CVA-43). The first Coral Sea cruise from 19 September 1960 until 27 May 1961 was to Japan. VF-154 F-8s flew air superiority for the task force from NAS Atsugi and from Naha Air Base. After returning home in May, the squadron's home base was transferred to NAS Miramar, California, in June 1961.

The Coral Sea redeployed from 12 December 1961 until 17 July 1962 and became the first CVA to operate in the Bearing Sea. For this cruise VF-154 flew the updated F8U-2N (F-8D).

VF-154's third Coral Sea cruise was to Sydney, Australia, for participation in the 21st. annual celebration of the Battle of the Coral Sea. This deployment lasted from 3 April 1963 until 25 November 1963.

The fourth Coral Sea deployment started on the 23rd. anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, on 7 December 1964. VF-154, commanded by CDR

Flight of five VF-154 F8U-1s; 143779 (#401), 143798 (#408), 143801 (#411), 143773 (#402), and 143795 (#406). Notice the bottom two are carrying Sidewinders. (via Barry Miller)

Henry Glindeman Jr. was beginning their first Vietnam War WESTPAC cruise. Once on station, the Coral Sea joined TF-77 with the Hancock and the Ranger.

VF-154 F8U-1 143793 on 2 January 1959. Unlike the squadron's first F8U-1s, this aircraft has been delivered with the aerial refueling package as evidenced by the bulge above the guns. The colorful orange lighting bolts were eliminated after the 1958 cruise. (USN)





VF-154 F8U-1E (F-8B) 145466 flies over the flight deck of the USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) on 3-6-61. (USN)

killed and CDR Donnelly ejected and spent 45 hours in the shark-infested waters off Bang Long Island before being rescued. Then LT D. A. Kardell was killed while strafing trucks in North Vietnam on 9 May. The squadron's last mission was flown against their first target, the barracks at Dong Hoi, and LT J. A. Terhune was forced to eject over the Gulf of Tonkin where he was rescued.

For the squadron's first Vietnam cruise and its last F-8 cruise, VF-154 was awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and the Navy Unit Commendation Medal. Individual personnel were awarded one Silver Star, three Distinguished Flying Crosses and a 120 Air Medals. VF-154 would go on to fly six more combat cruises, five aboard Coral Sea and one aboard Ranger, and all with F-4 Phantoms. In 1983 the Grumman F-14A Tomcat replaced the Phantom.

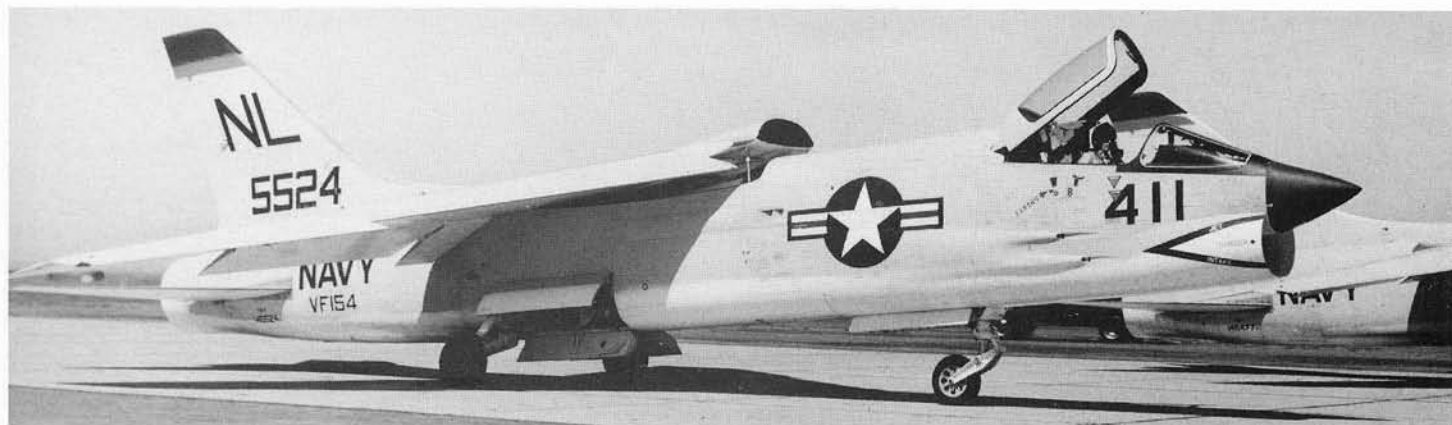
The F-8Ds would first see combat on 7 February 1965, the day after guerrillas attacked American bases in South Vietnam. The retaliatory air strikes took place against the Dong Hoi military barracks. This attack was the start of nine months of non-stop combat operations for the squadron and marked the squadron's loss of its first aircraft in combat. LCDR R. W. Scumaker ejected from his flak riddled

F-8D only to be interned until 1973.

Five more aircraft were lost by the Black Knights before suspending combat operations on 14 October 1965. On 26 March LT C. E. Wangerman Jr. ejected from his damaged F-8 and was recovered uninjured after attacking the Bach Long radar site. Bach Long claimed two more aircraft on 29 March. LCDR K. E. Hume was

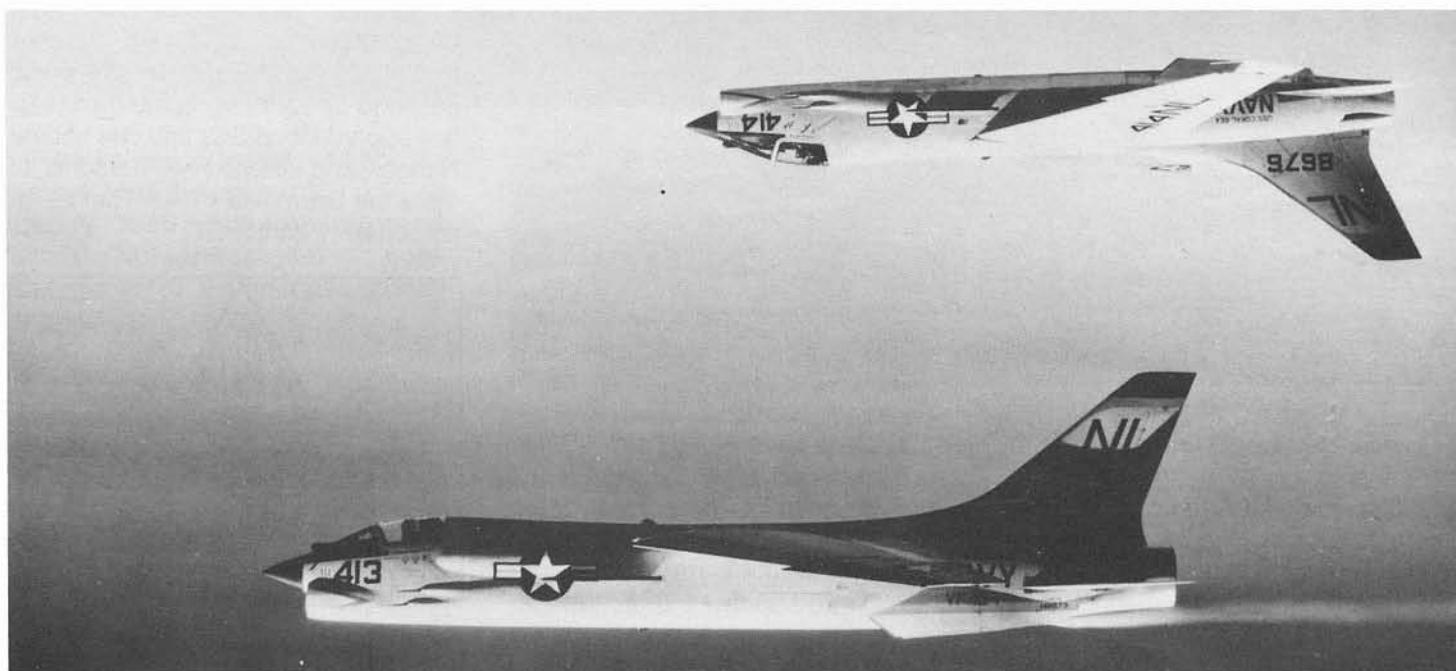


VF-154 F8U-1E 145524 taxiing at NAS Moffett Field on 5-16-59. The colorful orange lighting bolts have been replaced with a thin orange stripe below the black fin cap. (William T. Larkins)



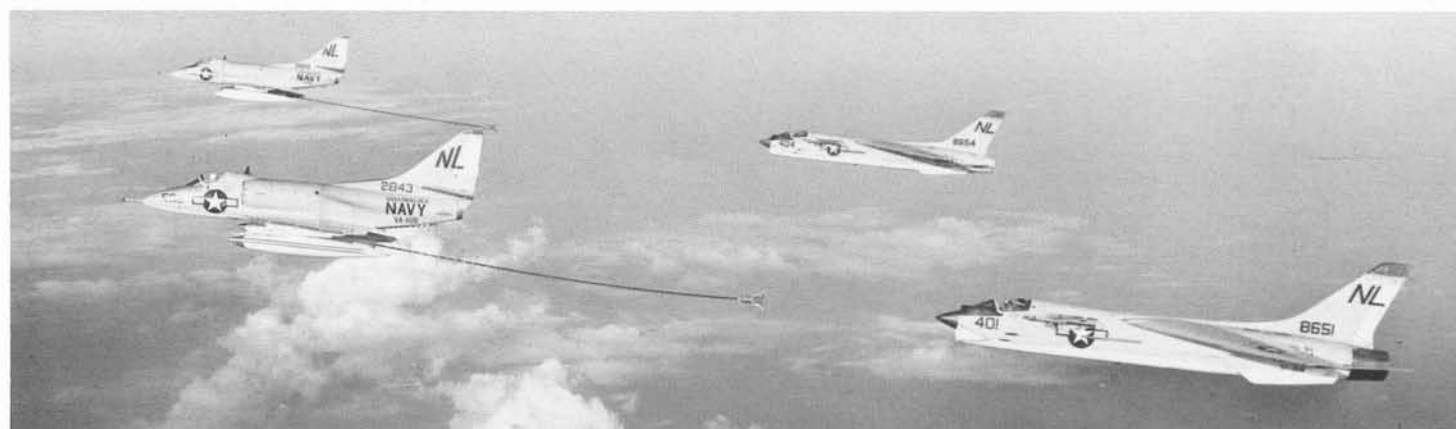


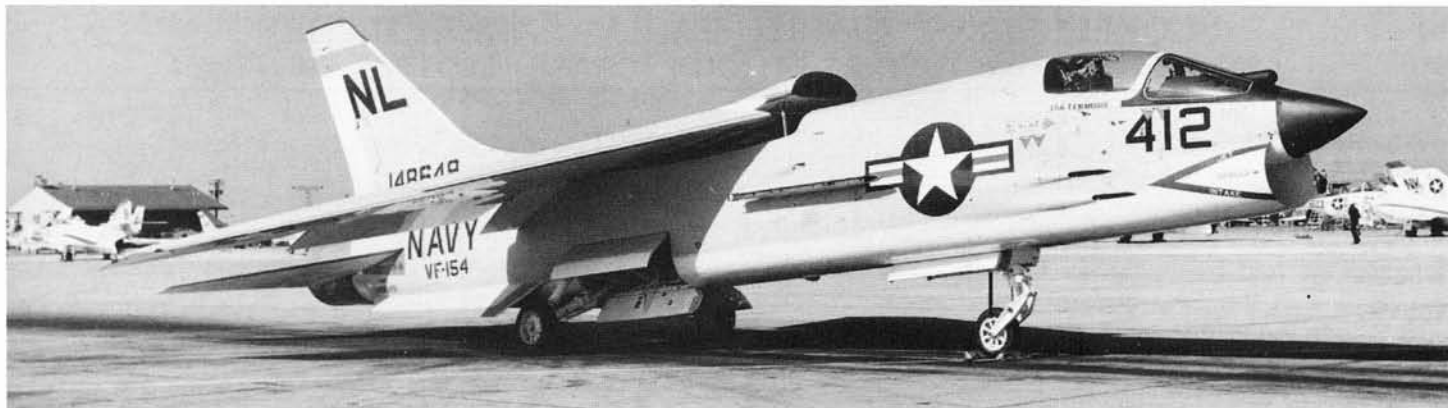
Air Wing 15 in review, with VAH-4 Skyraider, VF-151 Demon, VA-152 Skyraider, VA-153 and VA-155 Skyhawks, and VF-154's F8U-1E (145516) Crusader. (USN via Stan Wyckoff)



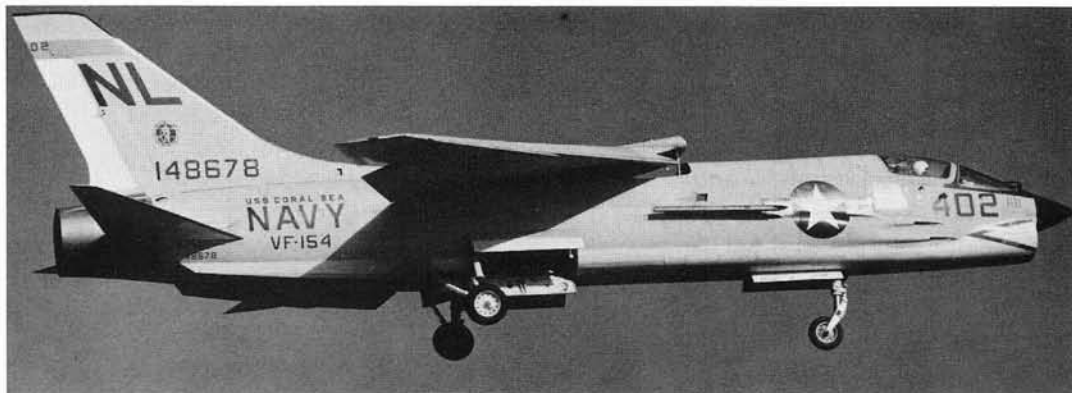
VF-154 F8U-2N 148673 (#413) flies 148676's (#414) wing while inverted during a flight over the Philippines in January 1962 while deployed aboard the USS Coral Sea (CVA-43). (USN)

VF-154 F8U-2Ns (F-8Ds) 148651 (#401) and 148654 (#404) preparing to refuel from two VA-155 Skyhawks while over the Pacific in May 1962. (USN)





VF-154 F-8D 148649 at NAS Miramar on 1-19-63. The pilots name LT JG T. G. HENDERSON was painted below the canopy rail. The letters WBJs (Worlds Best Jet Squadron) were painted in black on the raised wing's red bulkhead. (Clay Jansson)



VF-154 F-8D 148678 over NAS Atsugi on 19 September 1963. The name CDR W. R. ELLIS was painted below the canopy rail. The thin orange tail stripe is clearly visible above the rudder. (T. Matsuzaki)

LT Terhune ejects from Black Knight F-8D 147899 over the Gulf of Tonkin as 148670 flies chase on 8 November 1965. Aircraft were armed with the double Zuni rocket tubes on the upper missile rail and a single Sidewinder on the lower rail. (USN)



VF-154 F-8D 148673 at NAS Miramar on 9-12-64 with the Black Knight insignia on the tail. The ventral fin was bordered by orange. (Swisher)



CONFESSIONS OF AN EARLY SADER RAIDER AS RECALLED BY THEN LTJG JOHN (CRASH) MIOTTEL OF VF-154

"When VF-154 received the first F8U-1 in June 1957 I had a total of about 600 hours, approximately half in props (SNJs and T-28s). My only carrier landings had been my six trap qualification in the SNJ aboard the USS Saipan in October 1955. During this exercise I remember watching in amazement as one of my classmates, attempting a deck launch, tootled up to the island, turned hard to starboard and taxied into the Gulf of Mexico. As I recall, his subsequent taxiing was conducted in relative safety and serenity as the driver of a NYC cab. The rest of us smiled knowingly and went blithely on, confident that nothing like that would ever happen to us.

"Needless to say, I was absolutely thrilled to be assigned to a jet fighter squadron. Tom Wolf's depiction in his book *The Right Stuff* of the attitude, spirit and elitism of this cadre of characters is just about the most perceptive and accurate I've ever read.

"VF-154 was flying the North American FJ-3 Fury at this juncture. It was a great little aircraft, quick and agile with the somewhat less than reliable J65 engine which was subject to intermittent unexplained seizures at embarrassing moments.

"It would be a gross understatement to say that we in VF-154 were pretty happy when we got the word about transitioning to the F8U-1 Crusader. In fact, use of the word 'transition' was somewhat deceptive. The F-8 was no 'small step' for most of us, it was a major evolutionary leap; a new world in terms of complexity, handling variables, overall operational capability and flight dynamics. For example, two of these technological 'advances' were:

A. the so-called 'J.C.' maneuver which evolved out of the tendency of the aircraft to porpoise when it touched down. Once this phenomenon commenced, it rapidly became increasingly violent as the pilot invoked his savior (hence the 'J. C.') and



tried to compensate. In this situation one was always a bit overanxious and thereby automatically out of sync. The solution was simply to undialate, relax and stop trying to fly out of it.

B. Was a performance glitch that manifested itself as a sort of sinking dip or lapse in power before the afterburner cut in --- a real gut grabber in high speed low-level flight, especially when inverted (come on COME ON!!).

"I'll never forget watching one of our guys with about 10 F-8 hours under his belt try to 'lower the boom' at Fallon on a nice hot day. He came screaming along the runway at about 75 feet. When abeam the tower he hit the burner --- it was as if straight and level flight no longer existed --- the power sucked out from under him, he compensated with backstick --- the burner hit, he pushed forward, etc. He looked like a supersonic kangaroo as he went out of sight. He survived, but there were some telltale chips in his hard hat --- or, was it that one could just discern several unusual bulges in the canopy where he'd made contact? Whichever, he was fairly pensive for a day or two.

Overall impression:

SNJ: Little Deuce Coupe

FJ-3: Austin Healy

F8U-1: Formula One

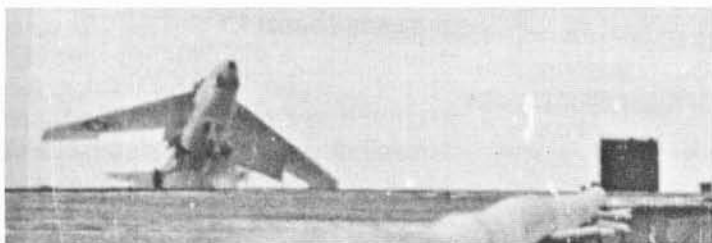
"When it came time for carrier qualifications, I guess one could say that at least most of us hadn't developed too many bad habits around the ship since our only prior exposure was our six measly SNJ traps sometime in the dim past. But there was no prob-

LTJG John Miottel on VF-154's flight-line at NAS Moffett Field in December 1957 after becoming the first Fleet pilot to complete carquals in the F8U-1. (John Miottel)

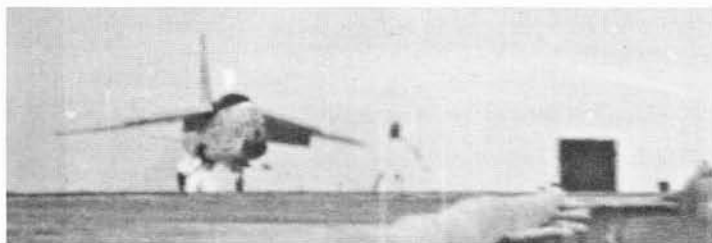
lem because we had a hot-shot Marine F-8 driver along as an observer - some jar-head named Glenn.

"As it turned out, I ended up in a contest with our Ops officer for the first operational squadron pilot to qualify (which certainly meant first on the West Coast and probably in the entire fleet). We both had five traps but Ops had the rank and was using it. Thus, he had arranged to have the next shot and I was pretty downcast until good old Major Glenn found something just wrong enough with my superior officer's aircraft to delay his launch. I could swear I caught a glimpse of that famous John Glenn grin and a quick wink as I rolled onto the cat that day. My Hero!

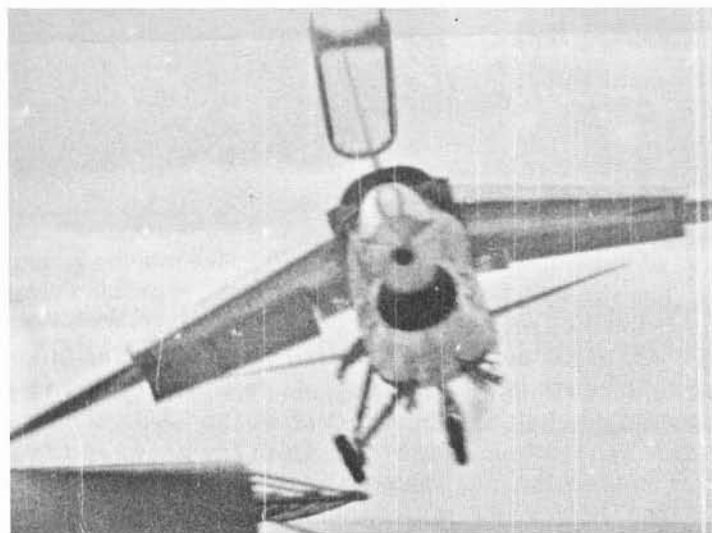
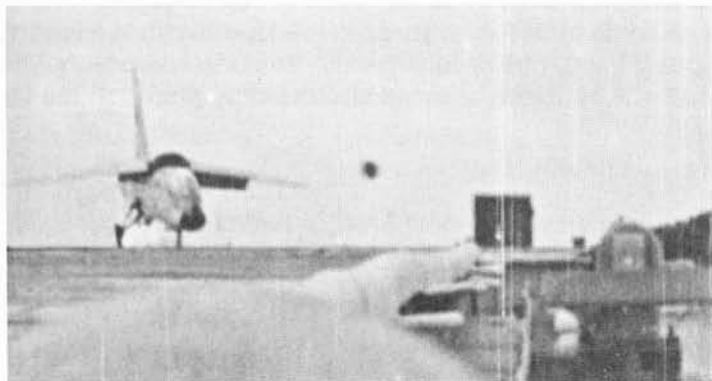
"We lost two pilots during carquals. They had been good buddies and experienced pilots, but both were kind of nervous about carrier work. On 19 November 1957, LTJG C. O. Thompson --- after many attempts --- and never getting near enough to blow the dust off the wires --- I'm sure breathed a sigh of relief as he was binged back to Moffett from the Hancock which was just outside Monterey Bay. Unfortunately his respite was tragically brief since neither he nor his aircraft were ever seen again. My first roommate Lew Jesse hit the ramp in January 1958, while the Hancock was conducting carquals 400 miles west of Los Angeles.



LTJG Lewis E. Jesse strikes the ramp of the Hancock in January 1958 during predeployment carquals 400 miles west of Los Angeles.



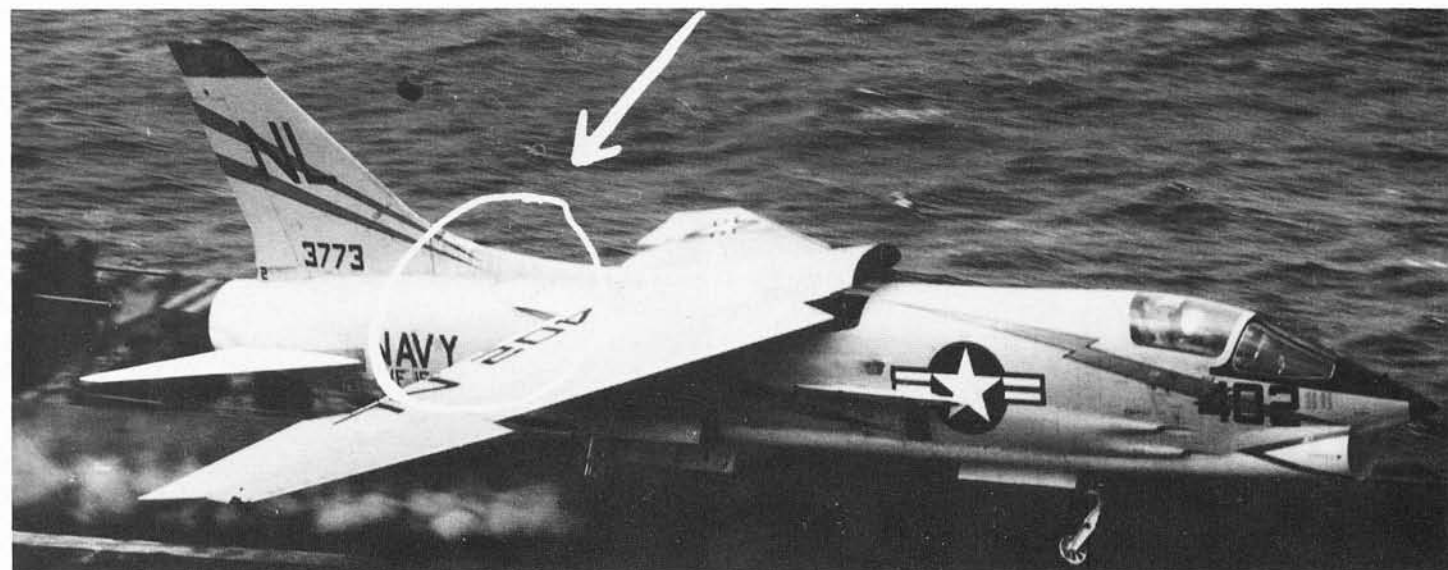
The port main landing gear separates from the VF-154 F8U-1 as the aircraft continues down the deck on the two remaining gear.

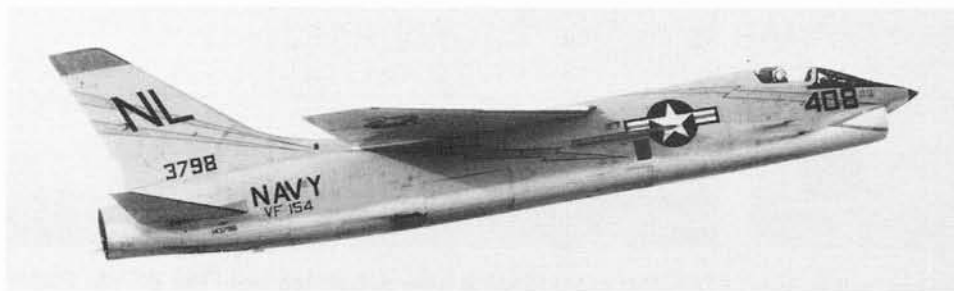


The Crusader continues down the angle on the nose wheel. Near the end of the angle Jesse's F-8 touches back down on the remaining main gear.



The F-8 leaves the angle and the canopy fires as Jesse heads for the water and his death. Below, side view of 143773 showing the wrinkles in the fuselage caused by the ramp strike. (all photos via John Miottel)





In flight view of VF-154 F8U-1 143798 during the 1958 cruise. (via Ed Shiver)

"The Hancock deployed in February of 1958 with the remaining pilots all just barely carrier qualified. Needless to say it was to be interesting and eventful cruise.

"All in all my squadron's experiences would seem unbelievable if one hadn't been there. Unfortunately there were a sufficient number of incidents to cause VF-154 to suffer the loss of 45% of its pilots including 5 pilots and 1 crew member killed, and as best I can recall 14 struck aircraft, a full squadron complement were struck; all in less than 2 years.

"On 5 March 1958, I had flown as escort for an F9F-8P reconnaissance flight and returned to the vicinity of the ship about 0900 and entered the dog pattern to await recovery. On my first pass I called 2500 lbs. at the 180 position and received a wave off on approaching the ramp. As I entered the downwind leg for the second time the ship instructed all aircraft in the landing pattern to clean up and dog. I noticed that two or three other F8Us were dogging. Then two F9F-8Ps were recovered due to low fuel states. The five F8Us were cleared to enter the landing pattern and on the downwind leg the tower informed all aircraft that the #4 and #5 arresting cables had been removed leaving only wires 1, 2, and 3. I was directly behind #411 in the pattern and saw him receive a bolter or a wave off. As I came aboard I felt that I had a steady glide path and good speed control. However, I received a bolter and added power for the wave off. As I did so the LSO called and asked me to recycle my hook as it was cocked to one side. I recycled the hook twice but still had a warning light in the up position. On the

next approach I felt I had touched down among the three remaining wires, however, I received no arrestment. On the next pass I was still behind #411 and when I was between the 180 and 90 position I noticed that 411 had received a bolter and as the aircraft neared the end of the angled deck a thick stream of whitish vapor tinged with yellowish brown was streaming from the port wing. The aircraft seemed to be well under control and commenced a climb as the pilot, LTJG C.F. Ramsey (my second roommate), transmitted: "Tower this is 411, I have a utility hydraulic failure, I'm going up and eject." After a interval of perhaps 5-10 seconds the ship transmitted: "Negative 411 Bail out! Bail out now!" I was just about abeam the island and I caught sight of the aircraft in an extremely steep dive about two miles ahead of the ship at about 500 to 600 feet, still streaming smoke or vapor. I did not see the pilot leave the aircraft and it was assumed he was killed on impact. The ship ordered the remaining aircraft to clean up and head for the beach. I called the ship, and said negative as I reported my fuel state as 1500 lbs. They rogered and said to stay in the pattern and try to land as soon as the other aircraft were given a steer.

"The two F-8 pilots who were binged to the beach in Oahu flew into the island's worst storm in 50 years. LTJG Carl "Holy Roller" Koen found himself at critically low-state somewhere above the clouds climbing to eject when he happened to look down and see a hole in the overcast --- there, through the hole, he spied the runway at Barbers Point. Needless to say he rolled over and made an expeditious descent. Being of strongly religious persuasion, Koen did not even stop to sign the yellow sheet after landing, but proceeded directly to

the base chapel.

"The other VF-154 pilot, LTJG Paul 'Foggy' Hamilton, also found himself above the clouds somewhere north of Oahu with only fumes and condensation left to fly on. Somehow he finally raised MCAS Kaneohe. Hamilton's contact was a Marine corporal who had the presence of mind to crank-up a portable GCA unit which hadn't been used in 3 years. He proceeded to talk Hamilton in to a landing downwind (Paul later swore that he could see the duty-shark off the far end of the runway thrashing around in anticipation). Being somewhat more temporal by nature, Hamilton repaired forthwith to the 'O' club which was opened for him by the base commander. At which the MAG-13 skipper presented him with a 'green card' instrument rating. This, of course, was somewhat of a joke since the prime NAV gear in the F-8 at the time were OMNI and TACAN --- the problem being that no one west of San Diego seemed to have a fully operational and reliable TACAN station.

"After a steer was given to the departing aircraft, I made two more passes. I was positive that the landing had been among the remaining wires since I could feel the wheels rolling over them, however, I received no engagement. After waving off from the second attempt the LSO called the tower and said 'Tower, we're never going to trap 404 with that canted hook.' After a short pause they told me that they were going to rig the barricade. When I was finally cleared, I entered the glide path with less than 500 lbs. I was extremely careful in monitoring my line up and airspeed and in keeping the meatball centered. As I got within 100 to 200 yards of the ramp the mirror was obscured from view by the barricade. This caused me to become low and power was added. I knew that I would be low over the ramp but I felt the best and only thing to do was to go ahead and intercept the glide path immediately prior to engaging the barricade. As I approached the barricade I held it steady and kept flying as I had been instructed and the LSO called what I believed to be "cut" and I came off on the power and

"The forces of the arrestment seemed somewhat less than that of those usually received from the arresting cables. Everything seemed fine when suddenly the aircraft veered to the left and I was on the port deck edge. The plane came to rest there for an instant then rolled about 60 degrees to port, where-upon I blew the canopy off since I felt there was a good chance of going over the side. Almost immediately the aircraft rolled on over and turned on its back as it fell. I looked up and saw the wake of

the ship and put my hand on the ditching handle. I braced for the impact and as the water rushed into the cockpit I pulled the handle and was apparently thrown free.

"I tried to regain my senses and swim free of the screws, as I bobbed to the surface abeam of the LSO platform. I had great trouble breathing because my oxygen mask would not function and I could not release the fittings that clamped it to my hard hat. I swam to a large rubber raft, inflated

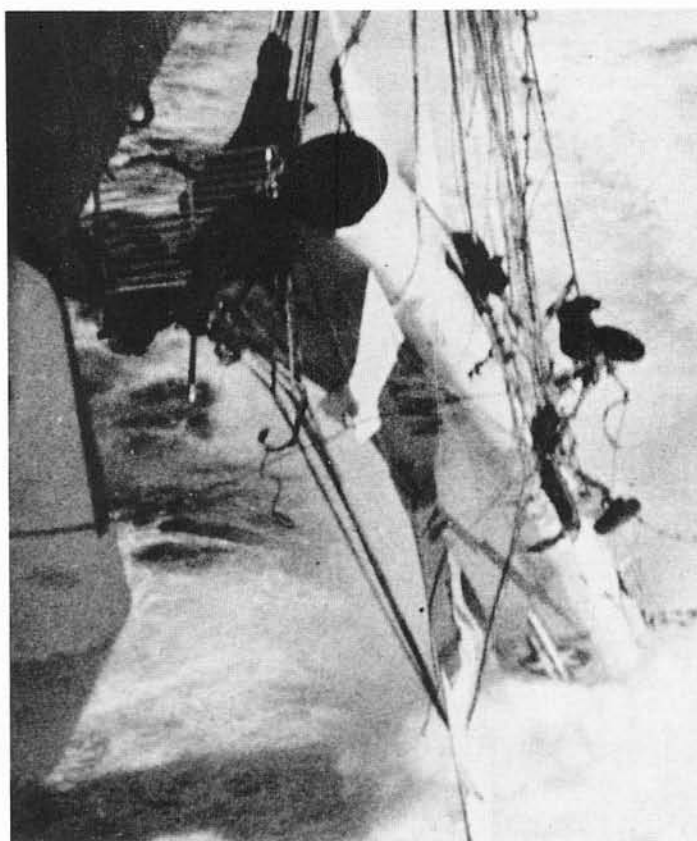
my flotation gear and pulled the mask down over my nose, got some air and tried to release it. Finally I slipped my hard hat and mask off over my head and lit a flare to let the ship know where I was. Shortly thereafter I was picked up by the helicopter. So ended my initial barricade test.

"Although apparently unscathed, I emerged from my experiences with every part of my body aching except three toe nails. My subsequent recovery took place on Oahu.



5 MARCH 1958, LTJG JOHN (CRASH) MIOTTEL'S FIRST BARRICADE EXPERIMENT.

VF-154 F8U-1 143792 in the port catwalk edge just prior to rolling over the side. Below and right, 143792 hangs in the barricade straps with the cockpit submerged. The F-8 was cut loose and sank off the coast of Hawaii. (John Miottel)



"The events of 5 March 1958 and my prior experience with the F8U-1, did make me reflect on the performance and safety of the Crusader. As a dedicated young pilot and in my capacity as acting safety officer, I therefore, naturally thought it incumbent upon me to do some rigid testing of the aircraft's systems and performance. Although for security reasons, most of this work was conducted secretly, I found it necessary to set up and execute one of my experiments at NAS Atsugi in May of 1958.

"The idea was to verify the low level maneuvering characteristics of the aircraft in the event it was necessary to employ them in barricade engagements, combat or other perilous situations. In order to perform this test, I took the runway, hit the burner,

143737 tries the "flying engagement" technique: still airborne as the tail hook catches the #1 wire until the wire plays out where upon the entire weight of the aircraft is put onto the nose gear which collapses. (John Miottel)

cranked the F-8 up to maximum ground speed short of blowing the tires, sucked up the gear, popped the wing down and executed a snappy 4 point roll passing the end of the runway at an undetermined altitude. The only problem with this exercise arose from the fact that the Skipper of the base happened to choose that exact moment to pause in his morning stroll around his office and to look out of his window. Unfortunately, although I was safely airborne and completely under control, the aircraft had a slight tendency to 'dish out' on the inverted portion of a roll. Thus, from the skipper's vantage point, an upside down F-8 had just disappeared below the tree line at the base perimeter. Of course, this apparent aberration was all part of my program. I had also selected this opportunity to conduct some ground-breaking research in agronomy. Hence, I planned to closely observe the adjacent paddy fields which I knew to be at least 20 feet below the elevation of the airfield. Furthermore, I believe that, as a result of this research effort, that year for the

first time on record, the local populace was blessed with a bumper crop of fried rice.

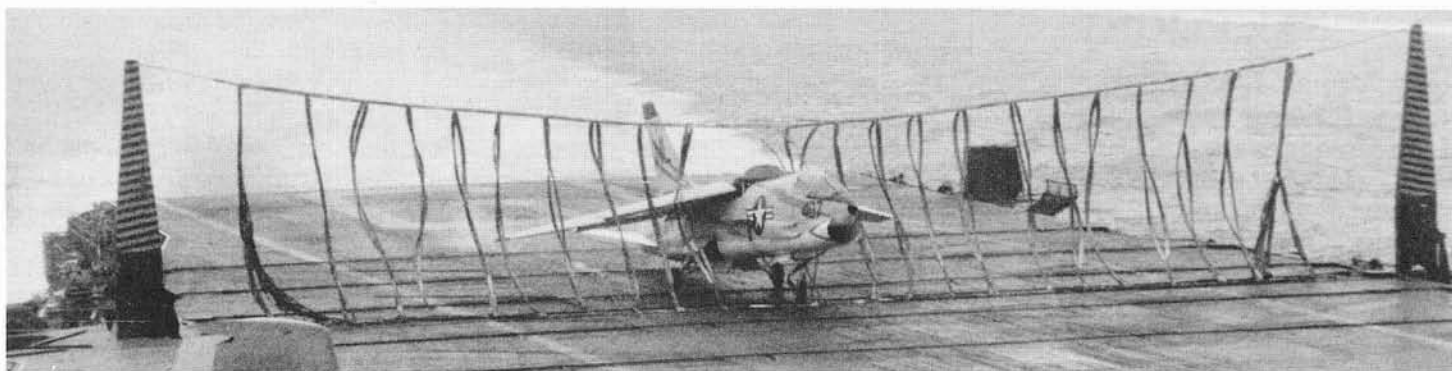
"Meanwhile the base commander --- when he had sufficiently regained his power of speech --- took strong exception to my experiments, obviously not a man of scientific inclination (and undoubtedly a BLACK-SHOE). Fortunately, LT 'Easy Ed' Shiver had command of the Crusader Kamakazi detachment at this time and was successful in keeping me out of the line of fire by knocking rings with the good captain. However, my acting squadron CO, LCDR Baldwin, simply didn't comprehend or appreciate the merits of my research either. He not only had the nerve to burden me with the only flight violation of my otherwise unblemished career, but also he had the temerity to tag me with the unseemly moniker, 'CRASH'.

"Shipmates will recall Shiver (A.K.A. 'Backhoe' or 'Mr. Chips') as an early pioneer in alternative arrestment techniques for the Crusader.



"Easy Ed" Shiver (man farthest from the camera) surveys damage to the deck which was the result of "squatting" on the tail hook. The second time he did this, the hook shoe was sheared about 90% off by the steel deck plate and he caught the #1 wire with his toenails. The ship's carpenters loved him so much that he was called "Mr. Chips". (Ed Shiver)





The most dramatic example consisted of a procedure in which the landing Crusader carved trenches in the ship's teak decking from the fantail up to the area of the arresting gear. At this point the impact of the buried hook against the metal deck edge underlying the arresting cables generally caused separation of the hook shoe. This was accompanied by sudden deceleration sufficient to allow engagement of the number one wire with the remanant lip of the hook shank. The LSO and Ships carpenter finally combined forces to convince Shiver that this procedure --- although effective --- was too costly, so he gave it up.

"On 20 June 1958, the culmination of my scientific exercises and thoughtful experimentation came to pass. The proof is the picture of 143796 (#407) sedately taxiing into the barricade. I'm sure, that upon sober reflection, my ex CO ADM Baldwin would admit that if it were not for my efforts, this might never have happened.

"On 20 June, I was launched for a refresher landing period. After a couple of wave-offs and a couple of traps, I was approaching the ship in what seemed to be a good steady pass, on air speed and with good line up. As I touched down I felt the wheels going over the wires and was very surprised not to receive an engagement. I was informed that I had a cocked hook and was told to recycle it. After all attempts to straighten the hook failed, I was told to conserve fuel while the barricade was rigged. Since I had a previous barricade engagement and knew what to expect, I felt that rather than ejecting I could bring the aircraft aboard. At about 800 lbs. I started into a straight in approach and came on glide path slightly low, pretty far out. I corrected for the low and at this time the mirror was obscured by the port barricade stanchion, but the LSO was talking me down. When I saw the meatball again it was slightly high and I was slightly right of the center line from trying to look around the stanchion. I corrected for both conditions and felt in good

20 JUNE 1958, LTJG JOHN (CRASH) MIOTTEL'S SECOND BARRICADE EXPERIMENT



shape over the ramp. The LSO called 'cut' as briefed. I unwittingly advanced the throttle slightly and tried to pull it around the horn and therefore going into the afterburner detent. I immediately realized what I was doing and pulled the throttle out of the afterburner detent before ignition could take place and pulled it aft and around the horn into cutoff. The engagement felt very comfortable and not unlike a normal arrestment."



FINAL FLIGHT

1 August 1958: I can't believe that my F-8 flying days are just about over. It's a great day--CAVU all the way. The sea south of Okinawa is slick as blue ice. The starboard catapult has just launched "Easy Ed" Shiver, who's also on his last hop.

It's all familiar routine as I roll toward the port cat, but that anxious / exhilarated feeling keeps blipping my concentration. Just do the procedure--it'll be a flawless flight.

A SUMMATION: Taxi up check up turn up salute WHAMMO! Off and running fifty feet over the water. A smart clearing turn to port OOPS! I can't roll back straight and level. The stick hits dead center and stops. Try again: "Klunk!" Another sickening stop at center. OOPS! Pay attention! The nose has dipped steep left bank and accelerating no bano, please. Okay, back stick and kick right rudder jerky yaw into wings level, nose up, attitude GOOD! Real time from launch about 3.5 seconds.

NOW! What the hell is going on with the stick? OPPS! Horrible thought!: the wings are folded!! Jeezus, no way to see them! Is it possible those buggers have shot me off with my wings folded! A quick queasy grope down to the right side of the seat; WHEW! The wing fold lever is down and locked. Looks okay. So, gear up, wing down, cleaned up, accelerating and climbing. So far so good: over 2,000 feet, safe ejection altitude. Everything else seems A-OK except no starboard aileron.

Let's see; no obvious wedges around the stick base. Maybe it's time to share this little private drama. Ed's ahead and above in a slow port turn, waiting and wondering when I'll join him. I do, and we consult a bit about the possibilities. I'm okay on visual check. No nasty little red flags sticking up from the wing folds. Still, something is drastically wrong. What is it? Triple check time. Whether I ease it over or slam it over, the stick is not going to cross the center line in the foreseeable future. Now what?

Okay, no alternative but the ignominious call to Mother. We gotta tell the ship.

"Er um seems like we got a slight glitch here no, no, take it easy, nothing lethal." Long descriptive passage; response as expected. The whole nine yards.

"Affirmative, I tried that roger, tried that too Hi, skipper no, just fine except yeah, tried it Roj, that didn't work -- wait one, I'll try again Nope, didn't work this time either negative, all systems check." (Mental flash! Ed and I are scheduled to catch the COD flight from "Hannah" heading home tomorrow, and we just gotta be on it!)

"Tell you what, I got a good idea, why don't I just dump fuel, get down to a nice fat reserve, come back, and try to get it aboard? No hassle! Pri Fly doesn't like it, huh? Why not? Really, it's a piece a cake, I'll do fine. Tell them I got a half stick and plenty of rudder ... & remember who there talking to -- we can always do another barricade! Okay, okay, I hear you; but Roger - bingo to the field at Naha, but Roger -- ten -- mile straight -- in approach, Ed leads and lands first." OK Naha -- Clear the field, call out the emergency crew and the Padre, bat-ten down the nurses: here comes Crash & Company!

Much later, Naha O Club: OPPS! Someone from base maintenance wants me. "Come on, Ed, we got a COD to catch!" Not exactly. The maintenance chief's waiting there with a funny grin. "You Mr. Miottel?" he says. "Got a present for you." He drops a slightly mashed quarter-inch Phillips-head bolt into my palm. "You know, we spent the last six hours tearin' that airplane of yours apart: up on jacks, every hatch open, every access panel off. Nothin', no joy, stick still frozen solid. So finally I send a guy up to sick bay for a dentist mirror. We get a flashlight and stick this mirror into a three-inch slot midships, turn on the light, and bingo, there she is between the starboard aileron actuator push rod and the frame: this little jewel, wedged in tight as a tick. Had a hell of a time gettin' it out; probably been floatin' around in the fuselage since birth, just waitin' to get stuck there on that cat-shot today. Amazin', ain't it: million-to-one shot I'd call that har, har, har! Get it?"

"Thanks a lot, chief, but how about

it, are we gonna be ready to launch in the morning"

"Jeez, sorry sir; it'll take us a week to glue that bird back together."

"But, chief, we just gotta get back aboard! The squadron needs us. They're already short of pilots and aircraft, we got this Lebanon thing breaking, and--,"

"Hey, no hassle, sir. We got another plane for you!" Amazed silence. "Yeah, it's that bird that one of your guys busted the landing gear off of on the ship, then flew in to Kadena three or four months ago. A real mess, but Air Force O&R took care of it and she's fine now. Been through a complete overhaul--new gear, new wing, new engine, the works. Just like new!"

HOT DAMN! This is it--what a finale! "Let's go catch a COD, Ed!!"

2 August 8:00 a.m.: Some quick fun and games saying bye-bye to our Okie pals, then back home to Hancock and that COD. Fabulous day there she is! I'm a bit heavy and don't want it to end just yet, so Ed goes on aboard. In due time, I request permission to lower the boom on Hancock. Okay, here goes: port side just above deck level KAROOMPA! Up, victory roll, ease over the top, down into the break, wham, bam, thank you ma'am, and aboard. Hook up & taxi forward--down the #1 elevator. As I park and unstrap, there's my plane captain grinning like a fool. Toss him the paperwork, "she's all yours!"

Two hours later: Packing to go, I hear a polite knock at the stateroom door. "Mr. Miottel?" "Hi chief." "Hi, Mr. Miottel. Just thought you'd like to know--that aircraft you brought back from Naha? It can't fly." OOPS! "Whatcha talking about--what'd I do?" "No, no--you didn't do nothin'. That plane just can't fly. Seems like Air Force O&R at Kadena, they got a little mixed up. On the engine change, they plugged in the wrong fuel control--must have been an old one off the shelf. Made for the F4D just won't work in an F8U. Well, we'll miss you. Good luck on the flight home!" Long reflective pause.... "Oh--I see--thanks, chief. So long." I close the door after him & return to my packing.

I think, it's just as well left now--to later and greater Sader Raiders.



VF-154 CARRIER OPERATIONS ABOARD THE USS HANCOCK, 29 APRIL 1958

VF-154 pilots man their aircraft in preparation for launch. F8U-1 143802 is in the foreground with 143805 behind it. Below, 143805 (#404) sits on the port catapult awaiting the launch order. Notice the location of the wing codes and the four round afterburner cooling doors located on the upper rear fuselage. (John Miottel)



FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE SIX TWO, VF-162 HUNTERS



On 1 September 1960 at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, VF-162 was established along with VF-161, VA-163, VA-164, and VA-165, as well as the parent organization Carrier Air Group Sixteen. Congress had granted the Navy permission to organize the Air Group for one year only, and its existence beyond this time was in doubt.

Unlike the other elements of CVG-16, VF-162 had no problems in finding aircraft to equip with. The F4D-1 Skyray had already been phased out of the Pacific Fleet, and was reduced in favor of the F3H in the Atlantic Fleet. The squadron would be the all-weather fighter element of CVG-16 which would be needed to replace squadrons temporarily taken out of service for retraining in the new F4H Phantom II.

In the spring of 1961, VF-162 transferred to Carrier Air Group Six, changed its tail code to "AF", and replaced VF-74 aboard the USS Intrepid (CVA-11). On 3 August VF-162 departed for an extended Mediterranean cruise which ended when the squadron returned to Cecil Field on 28 February 1962. The squadron immediately prepared to move to NAS Miramar, as CVG-16 had been ordered to the Pacific Fleet. On 2 April the Hunters began painting out their squadron markings on the Skyrays, and by the 4th, most of their personnel had left for VF-124's "Crusader College" at Miramar.

Flying the F-8A, the Hunters made their first WESTPAC and their first Crusader cruise aboard the USS Oriskany (CVA-34) from September 1963 until March 1964. After returning, the squadron did not deploy again for over a year, during which time VF-162 converted to the all-weather F-8E.

VF-162's next deployment took the squadron on its first war cruise, from 5 April until 16 December 1965. On 5 October LTJG Rick Adams in F-8E 150848 (#227) was hit by a SAM while over North Vietnam, and rescued. Although on fire, Adams flew his aircraft out to sea with the face curtain half pulled before he ejected. This would be his first of two shootdowns.

After a quick turnaround VF-162 left on its second war cruise on 26 May 1966 with CDR Richard Bellinger as the CO. CDR Bellinger, while the squadron XO in 1965, had been Rick Adams' wingman. On 12 July 1966, Bellinger once again saw Adams go down when he had been hit with AAA. Adams, thus became the first US pilot to be shot down and recovered twice. The powers that be decided that twice was enough for one war and Adams was censured from further action in Vietnam.

On 16 July 1966, four days after Adams had been shot down, CDR Bellinger decided to set a MiG trap. Since the MiGs had been following the strike group back to the sea, VF-162 would hang way back behind them on their exit to the coast. That way the trailing F-8s would catch the MiGs when they came out. The trap worked and you soon had three F-8s and two MiG-17s flying in a ever-tightening circle as each aircraft was trying to get a shot at his attackers. The fracas continued and Bellinger was hit, but managed to nurse his riddled F-8 to the sea, where he ejected and was picked up uninjured.

VF-162 F-8A 143752 on 1-19-63. Rudder, chin stripe, and wing stripes were black with yellow stars. Stripe below fin tip is yellow. (Clay Jansson)





On 9 October 1966, Bellinger avenged his downing by the MiG-17 in July. He had been hiding below enemy radar in mountainous terrain and had been given constant updates on the incoming MiGs. Once in range, the F-8s popped up from where they were hiding at 300 feet above the rice fields. The MiGs were at 3,000 feet and the F-8s entered a tail chase in which Bellinger fired two Sidewinders while following a MiG-21 into a split "S". The MiG shed its wing and Bellinger killed the Navy's first MiG-21.

The Hunters proved to be a colorful lot and certainly the most colorful pilot was the squadron CO, CDR Richard "Belly" Bellinger. Bellinger (call sign "Belly-One") was six feet tall and over 200 pounds with a beer belly, hence the name. Belly had even worked a trade with some Army folks for camo flightsuits to enhance his squadron's colorful image.

Belly-One tried another experiment during the cruise which intended

to help eliminate or minimize SAM launches against the strike force. Bellinger and his wingman launched with clean-winged F-8s which would be used as SAM decoys for the strike group (unarmed precursors of the Air Force wild weasels). The two Crusaders simulated A-4s by popping up near the target in preparation for a diving attack. Eight SAMs were launched and the clean maneuverable F-8s succeeded in defeating the SAMs. The strike force was able to complete the attack without any SAM interference.

On 18 August 1966 LCDR D. A. Verich was shot down in 150300 by AAA. He, like Rick Adams, would be shot down twice. The squadron lost two other F-8s on the cruise; 150924 on 6 October 1966 and 150919 on 19 July 1966. LT R. D. Leach was recovered, but LT T. A. Dennison who was downed by a SAM died in captivity.

The cruise ended prematurely when, on 26 October, a fire started in

VF-162 F-8E 150911 on display with the "Y" missile pylon and two Sidewinders on each side. Snoopy riding a missile has been added to the fin tip. (Jansson)

a flare locker which killed 44 and destroyed one A-4, two UH-2s, and damaged three other A-4s. After repairs, the Oriskany and the squadron returned to Vietnam on 16 June 1967 for the squadron's third war cruise.

LCDR Verich returned for this cruise and was rewarded with being the second VF-162 pilot to be shot down and recovered twice. He was downed in 150925 on 16 July 1967 by a SAM, and unlike Rick Adams, continued to combat. Three more VF-162 Crusaders would be downed in combat, but the pilots would not be as lucky as Verich. On 19 July CDR H. P. Hunter, the XO, was killed in 150899 by AAA fire. On 26 October 150310 was shot down by a SAM and LTJG C.

LTJG W. F. FLAGG's F-8E on 9-12-64 at NAS Miramar. (Swisher)





D. Rice became a POW. Then on 4 January 1968 150865 was also downed by a SAM and LTJG R. W. Minnich was listed as missing in action. Two other aircraft, 150916 and 150910, were lost during non-combat operations on 20 July and on 11 September 1967 respectively.

On 14 December 1967 LT Richard E. Wyman was flying in 150879 when he downed the 12th. MiG lost to Crusaders while operating 32 miles southeast of Hanoi. The aerial battle began developing when four MiG-17s

jumped an A-4 and an F-8 flying at 18,000 feet and 32 miles southwest of Haiphong. LT Wyman's flight was alerted and they engaged the MiGs in a fierce dogfight which lasted six minutes before the enemy aircraft disengaged and headed northwest.

Responding to the alert, LT Wyman and his skipper, CDR C. A. L.

CDR Bellinger's F-8E 149203 on 2-19-66. "Moon" eyes were used as nose numbers and the stars on the rudder were red, yellow, blue, orange, and green. (Clay Jansson)

LT Rick Adams' F-8E 149207 prior to the 1966 cruise where he would be shot down and recovered for a second time. (Clay Jansson, 2-19-66)



CDR "Belly" Bellinger in camo flight gear. He was the first Navy pilot to down a MiG-21. (USN)





Weathered F-8E 150913 on 1-28-67 after the 1966 cruise with wing pylon. (W. S.)



Swanson, arrived on the scene and began making close passes and firing their 20MM cannons at one of the fleeing MiGs. "The skipper and I made alternate passes at him," Wyman said, "and he kept wheeling and firing back.

The front of his plane was lit up with cannon fire. I got my sights on him once but he turned so hard I couldn't get off a shot. The skipper made another run and then I went in again."



VF-162 F-8E 149195 lands on the Oriskany on 12-5-67. Corrosion had set in and the paint around the service panels is showing through. "THE HUNTERS" was painted in black on the yellow raised wing's shoulder bulkhead. (USN)

VF-162 switched to the F-8J for the 1969 cruise aboard the Ticonderoga. The squadron was seen here at NAS North Island on 1-28-69 just prior to loading aboard the Tico. Wing stripes were black bordered by yellow. (Harry Gann)

"The air was hazy and the MiG had olive drab camouflage that blended in with the terrain. It was tough to keep him in sight. I tried to get him over the horizon so I could see him against the sky. I had to bite my tongue to keep from firing --- I didn't want to waste a shot. I turned into him as hard as I could and followed him into a bank. He started to roll out of the bank, then he seemed to change his mind. I was right behind him and I fired a missile."

The missile hit the MiG's left wing near the fuselage. LT Wyman reported that, "the wing fell off then red fire streaked along the left side of the plane as it cartwheeled down into a rice paddy. There was a big ball of flame when it hit. The dogfight started at high altitude but we were barely above the ground when it ended."





CO of VF-162, CDR "Stolly" Stollenwergn's F-8H 148628 at Miramar on 3-19-70 prior to the start of the 1970 cruise. (Clay Jansson)

In January 1968, just prior to leaving Vietnam, CDR Swanson went locomotive hunting with his Sidewinders. He launched one Sidewinder and scored a direct hit. The feat was repeated by LCDR John S. Hellman two days later, again with positive results when his Sidewinder hit behind the locomotive's stack.

The cruise ended on 31 January 1968 and CVW-16 regrouped, transitioned to the F-8J, and shifted to the USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14) for a cruise from 1 February 1969 until 18 September 1969. Compared to the 1967-68 cruise when CVW-16 lost 39 aircraft and twenty airmen, the 1969 cruise was uneventful. During this cruise only one aircraft, 150656, was lost during a non-combat operation.

The squadron returned to Vietnam one last time from 5 March 1970 until 17 December 1970 aboard the USS Shangri-La (CVS-38) and was reassigned to CVW-8 with a new tail code of "AJ". The squadron also switched their F-8Js to F-8Hs for this deployment. In 1970 the AIRWING lost only one A-4C and its pilot to combat. VF-162 lost three Crusaders (148650, 148660, and 148643) during non-combat operations with no loss of life. After returning to Miramar from this cruise the squadron was decommissioned.



VF-162 F-8H 148643, seen here on 3-14-70, would be lost to a non-combat accident during the 1970 cruise on 20 October. Markings new for this cruise were the black stripe bordered by yellow with three yellow stars on the ventral fin and yellow shading on the new "AJ" tail code. Also USS SHANGRI-LA was in red on many of the squadron's aircraft including 643 and 628 above. (Swisher)

At left and below, LCDR J. O. Kennedy Esq's F-8H 148650 at Da Nang, Vietnam, in May 1970. USS SHANGRI-LA was black. This aircraft was lost on 29 April during non-combat ops. (B. Miller)





VF-162 F-8Hs; 147070 (#202), 148691 (#203), and 147049 (#205) operating out of NAS Atsugi in July of 1970. THE HUNTERS can be seen painted in black on the yellow wing shoulder bulkhead on 147070 and 148691. (T. Matsuzaki)



FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE SEVEN FOUR, VF-174 HELLRAZORS



VF-174 started out as Bombing Squadron 81 (VB-81). Equipped with three SB2C-3 Helldivers, VB-81 was commissioned at Wildwood, New Jersey, on 1 March 1944. The squadron adopted its current insignia in May 1944, a ferocious-looking batlike creature with a razor for a beak.

On 15 November 1946, while flying SB2C-5 Helldivers from the decks of the USS Princeton (CV-37), VB-81

was redesignated Attack Squadron Thirteen Able (VA-13A). VA-13A became VA-134 on 2 August 1948 while flying F4U-4 Corsairs from the USS Tarawa (CV-40). Late in 1949, VA-134 moved to NAS Jacksonville, Florida, where the squadron was redesignated VF-174 in February 1950.

VF-174 made two deployments to the Med with their Corsairs. One aboard the USS Coral Sea (CVB-42) from September 1950 until January 1951, and one aboard the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt (CVB-43) in 1951 and 1952.

Conversion to swept-winged F9F-6 Cougars was completed by January 1953 with the squadron moving to NAS Cecil Field in 1954. VF-174 joined CVG-1 aboard the USS Midway (CVB-41) from December 1954 until June 1955. Upon their return to Cecil Field, the squadron transitioned to the FJ-3 Fury which was exchanged for F9F-8 Cougars in

the spring of 1956. The Hellrazors deployed their Cougars aboard the USS Bennington (CVA-20) from October 1956 until May 1957.

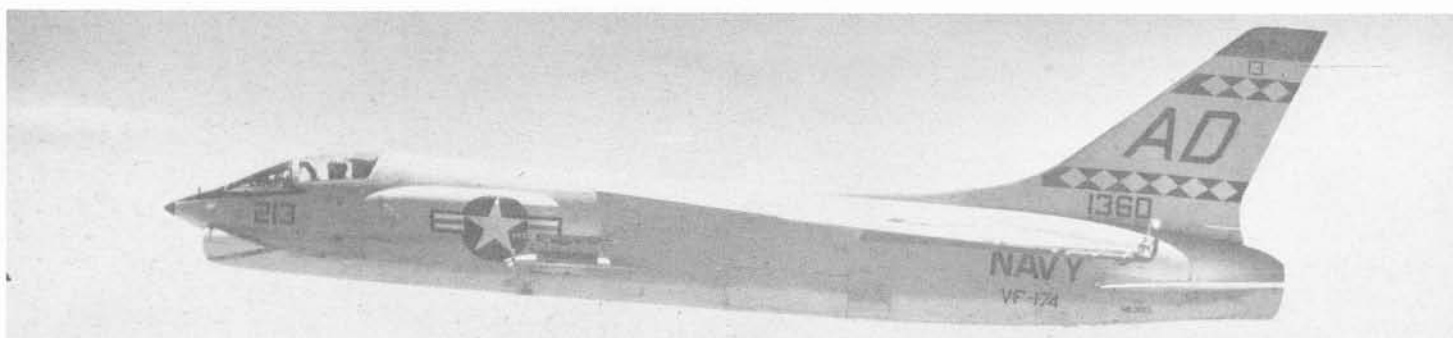
VF-174 was selected to spearhead a new Navy program which would establish Fleet Replacement Squadrons (FRS), later to become Replacement Air Group Squadrons (RAGS). The Hellrazors were chosen as the AIRLANT F-8 RAG and received their first six F8U-1 Crusaders in November 1957. F-8 pilot training was supplemented with the evaluation of the MK. IV full pressure suit, the F8U-1T Twosader and the training of French F-8E(FN) pilots.

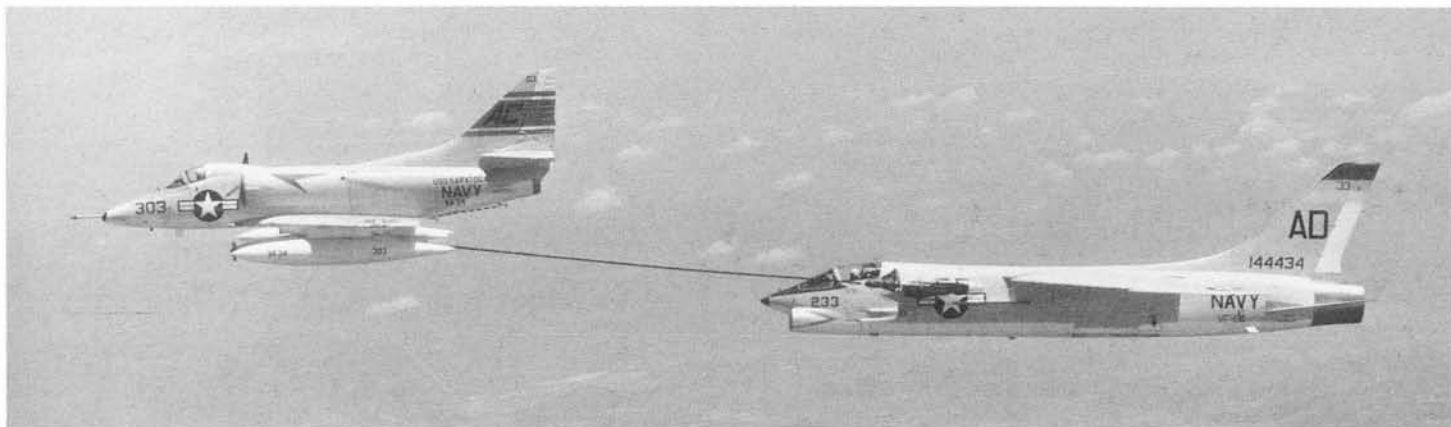
On 1 July 1966 VF-174 was redesignated VA-174, and traded in their F-8s for the new Vought A-7A Corsair II, to become the AIRLANT A-7 RAG. VA-174 was disestablished on 30 June 1988 and VA-122 at NAS LeMoore, California, took over all A-7 training.



VF-174 F8U-1 143788 at Master Field, Miami, Florida, on 1-25-58 with the squadron's original "AB" tail code. The stripes on the tail were black with yellow diamonds. (Swisher)

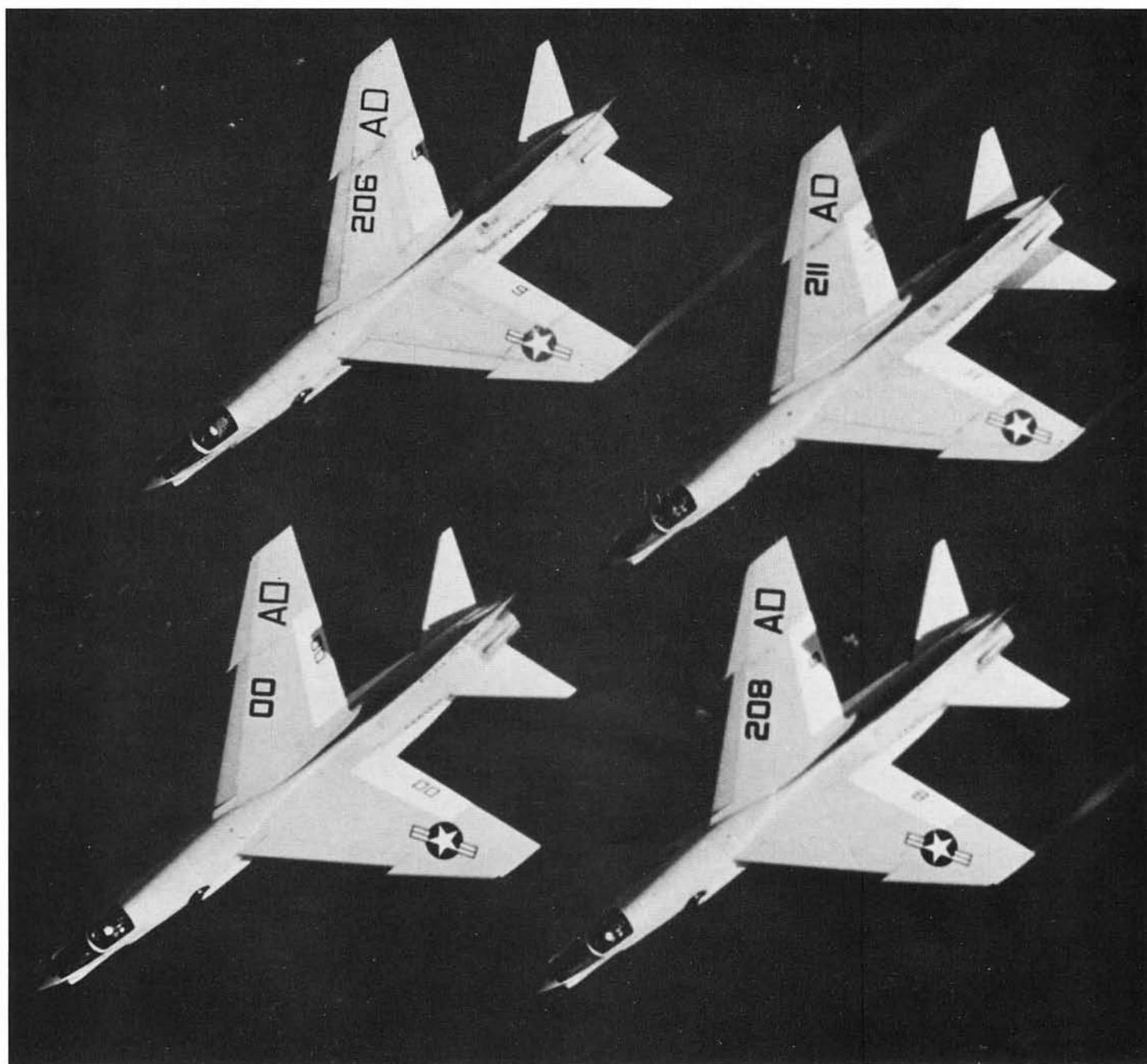
VF-174 F8U-1 141360 equipped with DELMAR target towing gear in 1958 after the "AB" tail code was changed to "AD" to reflect assignment to (RCVG-4). (USN via Barry Miller)





A USS Saratoga-based VA-34 A4D Skyhawk refuels VF-174 F8U-1 144434. The tail stripe between the "AD" and the "33" was yellow. (USN via Barry Miller)

Flight of four VF-174 F8U-2NEs (F-8E) from NAS Cecil Field from above in July 1962. The "OO" or double nuts on the lead aircraft designates it as the CO's. (USN via Barry Miller)





VF-174 CARRIER QUALIFICATIONS, IN AUGUST 1963, ABOARD FORRESTAL CVA-59
 F-8D 223 prepares to launch on the starboard catapult. F-8E 149167 (#232) launches from the starboard CAT. 149167 taxiing forward. (Arther Schoeni via AAHS)





VF-174 F-8E 149166 (#202) pulls up to the starboard catapult on the Forrestal with F-8Es 150345 (#204) and (#219) on the port side. (USN)

VF-174 F-8C 146945 takes a wave-off from the Forrestal. The yellow tail stripe shows up well. (Arthur Schoeni via AAHS)

VF-174 F-8C 145598 (#209) and F-8E 149167 (#232) wait for their turn at the catapult as another VF-174 Crusader launches during August 1963. (Arthur Schoeni via AAHS)



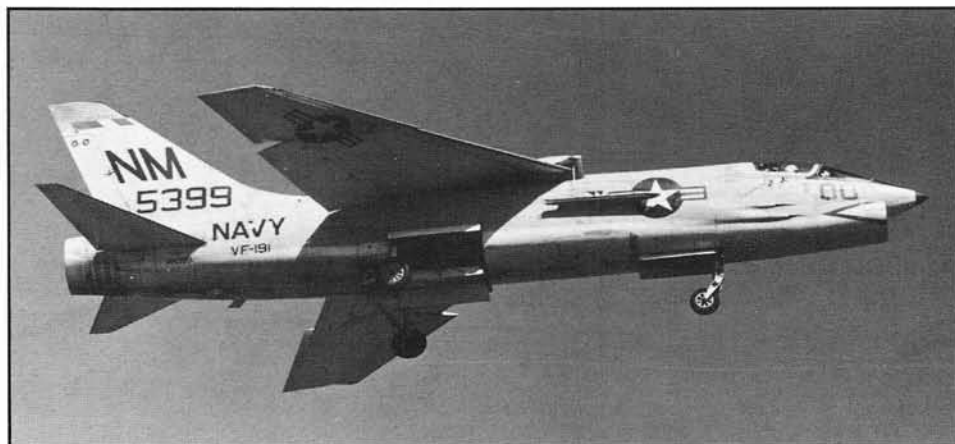


VF-174 F-8E 150296 at MCAAS Yuma, Arizona, on 3-16-63.
Notice the "Y" missile racks. (William Swisher)

VF-174 F-8D 148641 in flight over Mayport, Florida, on
8-18-64. (USN via Barry Miller)



FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE NINE ONE, VF-191 SATAN'S KITTENS



VF-191 was commissioned as VF-19 at NAAS Los Alamitos, California, on 15 August 1943. The squadron equipped with F6F-3 Hellcats and conducted carrier qualifications aboard the USS Altamaha (CVE-18). The squadron left for Hawaii in February 1944 aboard the USS Lexington (CV-16). Once in Hawaii VF-19 disembarked for gunnery training and in June was ferried to Eniwetok where they rejoined the Lexington's Air Group 19 (CVG-19) on 9 July 1944. VF-19's war cruise only lasted until early November, but in that short period of time Fighting Nineteen had shot down 155 Japanese planes as well as nearly 200 on the ground.

In February 1945 the squadron was based at Auxiliary Field Santa

Rosa, California. From here the squadron went to Grumman's Bethpage factory to be the first Navy squadron to equip with the new F8F-1 Bearcat. Before the Bearcat could be fielded in combat the war ended. On 15 November 1946 the squadron was redesignated VF-19A and then on 24 August 1948, Satan's Kittens became VF-191.

1949 saw Satan's Kittens re-equip with Grumman F9F-2B Panthers. VF-191 deployed to Korea aboard the USS Boxer (CV-20) and the USS Princeton (CV-37). The squadron's Korean War compliment was aided by the arrival of the six Blue Angels along with their F9F-2s and support personnel. 1953 saw the F9F-2s being replaced with F9F-6 Cougars which in

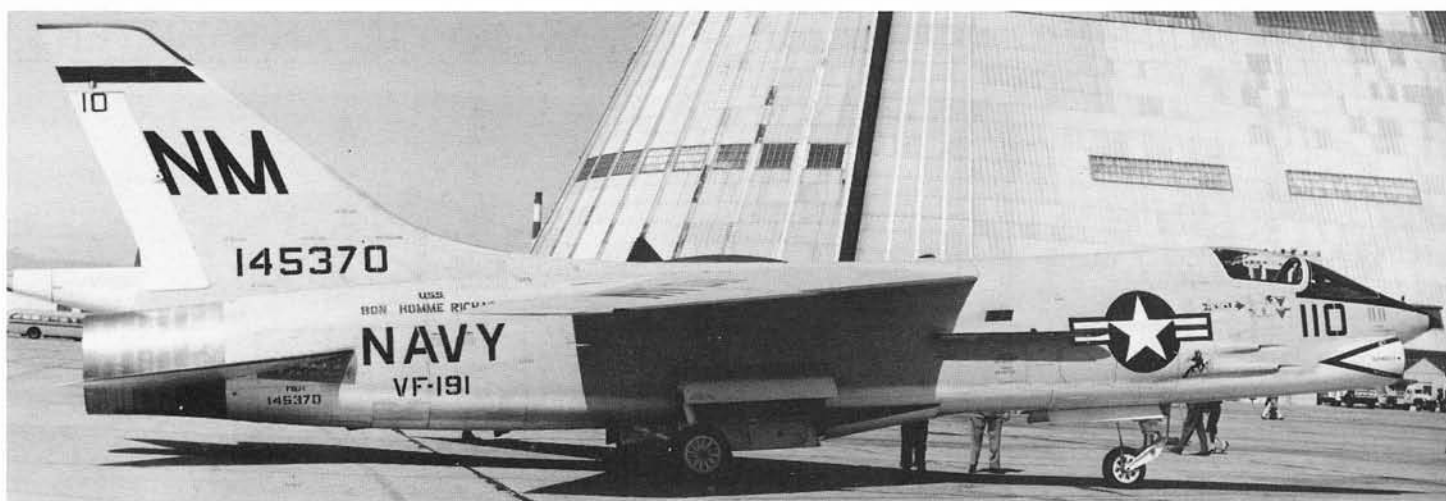
VF-191 F8U-1 145399 landing at NAS Atsugi on 16 August 1961. Aircraft is the squadron's CAG bird. Small tail stripe above the rudder carried the squadron colors of the Air Group: red, yellow, blue, orange, and green. (T. Matsuzaki)

turn were replaced by North American FJ-3 Furys in 1955. The squadron became supersonic in October 1957 when the Grumman F11F-1 Tiger was received.

The sleek, short legged Tiger was upstaged by the potent Vought F8U-1 Crusader in June 1960. VF-191's Crusaders deployed for the first time in 1961 aboard the USS Bon Homme

VF-191 F8U-1 145370 over the Pacific in late 1960. (USN / Tailhook VF02102)





Richard (CVA-31). Tragedy struck in March 1962 when the squadron's skipper, CDR J. M. Heffernan, was lost off the California coast.

The F-8A (F8U-1) was replaced by the all-weather F-8E in 1963 and the squadron deployed to Southeast Asia from 28 January 1964 until 21 November 1964. During this period F-8E 150139 was lost to an operational accident on 5 August 1964.

The first Crusader war cruise started on 21 April 1965 and continued for nine months and some 2,000 sorties from the decks of the Bonnie Dick. The squadron lost its first pilot to enemy action on 29 July 1965 when

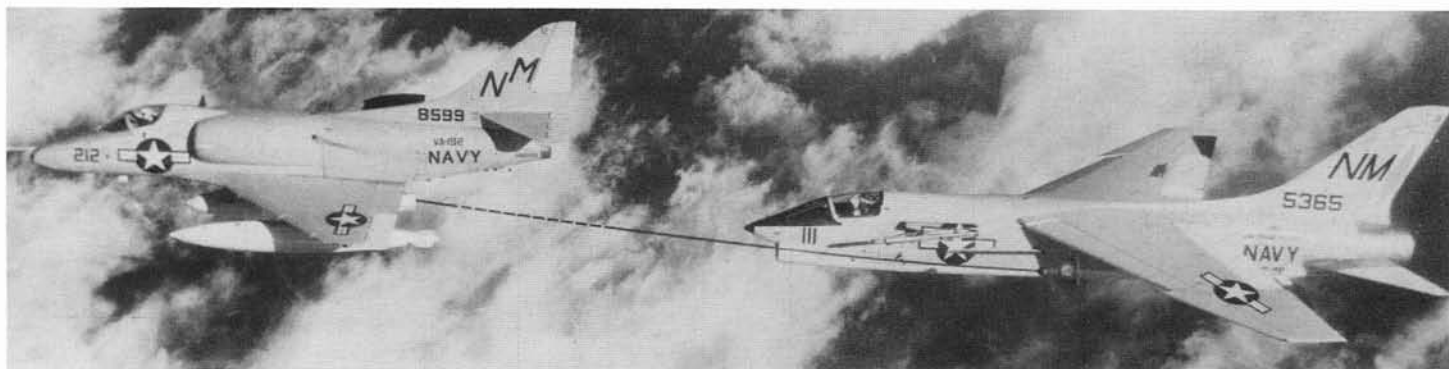
LTJG E. D. Brown was shot down by AAA over South Vietnam in F-8E 150337. This was followed by the loss of three other aircraft late in the cruise. LT D. A. Moore became a POW when on 27 October his aircraft (150655) was hit by a SAM. On 18 November, while flying 150332, LTJG W. D. Sharp was hit by AAA and subsequently ejected and was rescued. Another POW was taken on 28 November when CDR Rutledge was shot down by AAA in 150327. One other aircraft, 150331, was lost on 12 September and the pilot was killed during non-combat operations. The Bon Homme Richard left Vietnam waters on 4 January 1966 and returned home on 13 January.

VF-191 F8U-1 (F-8A) 145370 at NAS Moffett Field on 5-19-62. The tail stripe was red and Satan's Kitten insignia was painted on the forward fuselage behind the cannon ports. (William T. Larkins)

CVW-19 and VF-191 were transferred to the Ticonderoga (CVA-14) for the next war cruise. The Tico left for Vietnam on 15 October 1966 and returned on 29 May 1967. The F-8E was employed again and there were more losses. AAA fire claimed 149184 and deposited LCDR R. D. Mullen in the Hanoi Hilton on 6 January 1967.

VF-191 F-8A 145365 with red and white diamonds added to the tail at Litchfield Park, Arizona, after being replaced by the F-8E on 3-18-63. (Swisher)





VF-191 F-8A 145365 attempts inflight refueling from a VA-192 Skyhawk over the Pacific in November 1962. (USN / Tailhook VF02101)

Then on 7 March 1967 another pilot was killed in an operational accident which also claimed F-8E 150350.

The squadron returned to the war zone aboard the Tico on 27 December 1967 again equipped with F-8Es. The highlight of the cruise occurred on 9 July 1968 when LCDR John B. Nichols III, bagged a MiG-17 during a photo escort mission while flying 150926. Nichols was following LT William Kocar's RF-8 at 3,000 feet while the photo bird was at 2,000 feet. Nichols spotted a MiG-17 going for Kocar. He alerted Kocar who made a hard turn with Nichols in trail and as Nichols turned tracers from the MiG's

VF-191's CO, CDR BILLY PHILLIPS', F-8E 150869 at Miramar on 4-28-66. COMMANDER ATTACK CARRIER AIR WING NINETEEN is painted above the main gear door. The intake lips, radome, and fin tip were red. The red diamond on the rudder was faceted with the colors red-yellow-blue-orange to signify the Air Wing's squadrons. (William Swisher)

wingman streaked by his cockpit. A Sidewinder was fired outside the envelope and missed, but the lead MiG rolled out of its turn and Nichols fired his second Sidewinder which was a direct hit. The MiG did not go down and Nichols used his guns to finish the job. After the wingman's initial pass he had disappeared. The cruise ended on 17 August 1968 with the squadron losing F-8E 150667 and its pilot on 2 February and the loss of 150335 on 24 February 1968.

In July 1968, VF-191 traded its F-8Es for the remanufactured F-8J. CVW-19 again switched carriers and boarded the USS Oriskany (CVA-34) for another Vietnam deployment on 16 April 1969. This cruise proved to be relatively uneventful with the squadron losing only one aircraft, 150284 on 26 October 1969. The squadron returned to Miramar on 10 November.

During the turnaround period the squadron deployed to NAF El Centro, California, for two weeks of air-to-air gunnery. Satan's Kittens recorded 1,739 hits, including three century banners (100 hits each) and one double century banner (200 hits). LT Howie Nygard was the TOP GUN.

Three more Vietnam cruises were made by VF-191 on board the Oriskany. These were:

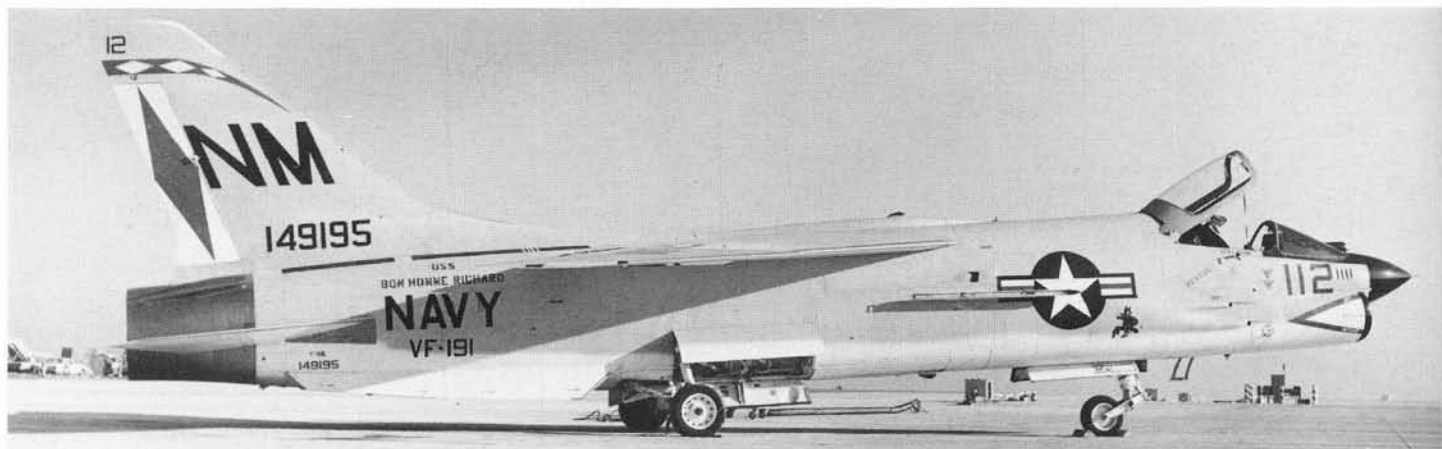
1. 14 May-10 December 1970
2. 14 May-18 December 1971
3. 5 June 1972-30 March 1973

During these cruises, 150289 and its pilot were lost on 6 November 1970, and 150887 was lost on 26 November 1972.

Two more Oriskany deployments followed the end of the war. These two deployments were from 18 October 1973 until 5 June 1974 and from 16 September 1975 until 3 March 1976. When the cruise ended in 1976 so ended F-8 fighter operations from 27 Charlie carriers.

In March 1976 conversion to McDonnell F-4J phantoms started. After a cruise aboard the USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) in 1977, VF-191 was decommissioned on 1 March 1978. On 1 December 1986, VF-191 was recommissioned along with VF-194 as a F-14 squadron assigned to CVW-10. The resurrection was short lived when VF-191 was disestablished on 29 April 1988 due to budget cuts which eliminated Air Wing Ten.





VF-191 F-8E 149195 from the USS BON HOMME RICHARD on 2-19-66. (Jansson) F-8E 150326 from the USS TICONDEROGA on 9-17-66. CDR Billy Phillips' second CAG bird. Markings as before with addition of black cannon areas. (Jansson) F-8E 149213 from the TICONDEROGA on 9-17-66 with LT BILL WORLEY painted below the canopy. (Jansson) ORISKANY CAG bird, F-8J 150299, belonging to CDR BILL Gureck on 4-14-69 (Swisher)





VF-191 F-8J 150284 at Alameda on 4-14-69. Tail markings on all Oriskany deployments were red and white except on CAG birds. The pilot's name under the canopy rail was that of CDR RAY DONNELLY XO. Donnelly would become the squadron's CO. This aircraft was lost in an operational accident on 10-26-69. (Swisher)

VF-191 F-8J lands aboard the Oriskany during the 1970 cruise. Notice the battle "E" behind the 107 nose number. (Don Priest)



VF-191 F-8J 150658 at Miramar on 5-12-73. LTJG RAY ROSE is painted below the canopy rail on the black placard which runs into the black anti-glare panel and radome. (Fred Roos)

VF-191 F-8Js 150318 (#103) and 150889 (#110) over the Pacific with 150889 flying inverted. "Y" missile rails were mounted with Sidewinders only being loaded on the bottom rails. (Arthur Schoeni via AAHS)





VF-191 F-8J 149201 on 5-14-70. Besides the battle "E", the forward fuselage carries CDR RAY DONNELLY CO. (Jansson)

LT CHUCK LOWRY sits in his SATAN'S KITTENS F-8J at Da Nang in June 1970. (B. Miller)

F-8J 150915 with triple ejector racks and practice bombs on 3-31-72. (Swisher)

CDR TOM BROWN's F-8J at Miramar on 5-12-73. (Roos)





VF-191 F-8J 149143 at NAS Miramar on 4-9-71 in Air Wing CAG markings. Radome, fin tip, tail flash and rudder diamond were red. The red rudder diamond was faceted with the Air Wing colors of yellow, blue, orange and green. (Swisher)

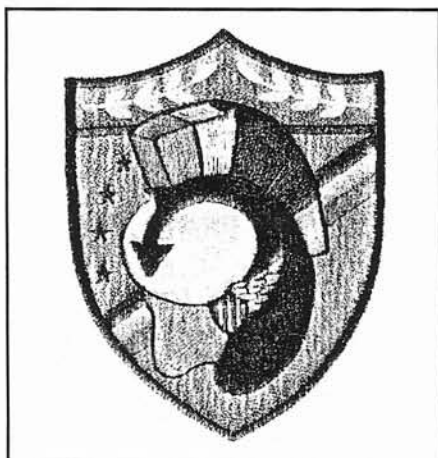


VF-191 F-8J 149205 rides out heavy seas with a VF-194 Crusader while positioned behind the raised catapult blast shields in 1971. (Don Priest)

VF-191 F-8J 150904 at NAS Miramar on 6-15-74. The pilot's name CDR SPUDS POTOSNAK was painted below the canopy rail. (Clay Jansson)



FIGHTER SQUADRON ONE NINE FOUR, VF-194 RED LIGHTNINGS



VF-194 was created when VF-91 (see VF-91) was redesignated VF-194 on 1 August 1963. Attached to CVW-19, the Red Lightnings' F-8C Crusaders were deployed aboard the USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) from 28 January 1964 through 21 November 1964. This goodwill tour to the Indian Ocean had a scheduled completion date of September 1964. On 28 August the USS Maddox (DD-731) and the USS Turner Joy (DD-951) were attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo gunboats and the "Bonnie Dick" was ordered to commence strike operations against North Vietnam. CVA-31 and VF-194 left Yankee Station for San Diego on 6 November 1964.

VF-194 arrived back at NAS Miramar on 21 November 1964 and began to immediately re-equip with the much improved F-8E in preparation for a Vietnam war cruise. The Red Lightnings found themselves on Yankee Station again as part of CVW-19 aboard CVA-31 on 26 May 1965. Combat operations were conducted until 2 October 1965 from both Yankee and Dixie Stations. On 9 October the squadron supported exer-

cises Checkertail, Autumn Flower, and provided support for Operation Dagger Thrust. These operations concluded on 3 November and after a well deserved R&R period in Hong Kong, the squadron returned to Yankee and Dixie Stations from 14 November to 16 December 1965.

During this cruise VF-194 earned the dubious distinction of losing the first carrier-based aircraft over South Vietnam. LCDR R. E. Weedon was shot down during a strafing run against a VC position on 30 June 1965. Luckily, LCDR Weedon was rescued by an Army helicopter. Two other combat losses occurred on 17 and 28 November due to AAA fire, and two operational losses occurred on 24 and 25 September respectively.

VF-194 returned to Miramar on 13 January 1966 and prepared for a return trip to Vietnam aboard the USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14). The Red Lightnings left Alameda for Vietnam on 15 October 1966 and returned on 29 May 1967. The on-line period lasted 126 days during which the squadron lost one F-8E and pilot, LT M. T. Newell, to a North Vietnamese SAM on 14 December 1966.

The second Tico war cruise lasted from 27 December 1967 until 17 August 1968, during which the squadron lost two more F-8Es, one to a SAM on 14 February 1968 over the North, in



F-8C 145579 on 4-3-65, after VF-194 converted to F-8Es for its 1965 cruise. (Swisher) F-8C 147001 on 4-3-65. (Jansson)





F-8E 150344 at Miramar on 2-19-66 after VF-194's second cruise aboard the Bon Homme Richard. (Jansson) The most colorful F-8 CAG BIRD ever is seen on 8-16-66. Tail stripes from top to bottom are blue, yellow, green, orange, red, and the lightning bolt and nose numbers are red. (Jansson) For the 1966 cruise VF-194 was assigned to the Ticonderoga. (Swisher)





F-8E 150932 at Miramar on 9-17-66 with wing pylons and dual fuselage Zuni racks during weapons training for the 1966-67 deployment. (Jansson)



F-8E 150353 landing at NAS Atsugi on 11-1-66. The tail markings remained unchanged from the previous Bonnie Dick cruise but black cannon blast areas were added for the 1966-67 cruise. Raised wing bulkhead is red with HUD'N-HUD'N in white. (T. Matsuzaki)



CAG BIRD, 150909 landing at Atsugi on 11-4-66 with the added black paint to the cannon blast area. (T. Matsuzaki)



F-8E 150311 on the USS Ticonderoga during the 1967-68 war cruise. Tail lightning bolt is red. (Candid Aero)

AT RIGHT → CAG BIRD, F-8J 150683 at Miramar on 4-14-69. COMMANDER CVW-19 and the CVW-19 insignia was under the wing (Swisher)



which LTJG R. C. McMahan became missing-in-action. The second loss was operational and occurred on 4 July 1968.

When the squadron returned to Miramar in August they set about converting to F-8J Crusaders for a fifth war cruise aboard their third carrier, the

USS Oriskany (CVA-34). The Oriskany and VF-194 left Alameda on 16 April 1969 and returned on 10 November 1969 with the loss of but one aircraft on 21 May.

The squadron was back at Miramar in December when LT Cyrus Riddell ejected out of an F-8J on short

F-8B 145533 was used for proficiency training while VF-194 transitioned to F-8Js. This 1-28-69 photo shows the enlarged red lightning bolt and lower location of the "NM" tail code as used on the 1969 and 1970 Oriskany war cruises. (Jansson)

VF-194 used F-8Js for its 1969 war cruise. 150882 is seen on 1-28-69 with USS Oriskany painted red. (Swisher)





ORISKANY AIR-OPS 1970

At left, Don Priest launches in F-8J 149182 in 1970; note location of wing codes. Bottom, F-8J 150307 touches down on CVA-34 with two Sidewinders on the fuselage racks. (Don Priest)

final due to loss of engine oil and subsequent seizure. The unpowered F8 flew through hangar one killing thirteen and destroying Crusaders from VF-191 and F4s from VF-96 and VF-92.

Two other VF-194 Crusaders were lost in January 1970 off the San Diego coast. During a ACM training mission LT Gary Crowell and LT Cyrus Riddell had a midair from which both pilots ejected successfully.

The Red Lightnings again deployed to Vietnam on the Big "O" on 14 May 1970 and while off the coast of Hawaii during night-ops LT Dave Woltz had a ramp strike. LT Woltz was unhurt but his Crusader was a loss. This would be the only accident during the cruise and the only cruise in which VF-194 would not lose an aircraft in the war zone. In November the squadron supported the Son Tay POW camp raid by flying BARCAP off the coast of Haiphong.

The Squadron returned to Miramar on 10 December 1970 and again left for Vietnam in May 1971. This cruise lasted until 18 December 1971 and was marred with but one operational loss on 21 June 1971. VF-194's Executive Officer (XO) CDR Dave Metzler entered the break and flew into the water. The ensuing search was unable to find any evidence of the pilot or aircraft.

The last war cruise of VF-194 and the Oriskany took place from 5 June 1972 until 30 March 1973. Again, one Crusader was lost by the squadron. This operational loss took place on 27 September 1972. Prior to arriving state-side VF-194 and the Mighty "O" witnessed the end of the war.

Two more peace-time deployments in F-8s were conducted aboard the Oriskany prior to transitioning to the F-4J Phantom in late 1976. These two deployments were from 18 October 1973 until 5 June 1974 and from 16 September 1975 until 3 March 1976.



VF-194 and its sister squadron VF-191 had the distinction of being the last two Crusader squadrons to deploy aboard a 27 Charlie carrier.

In March 1976 VF-194 converted to McDonnell F-4J Phantoms prior to a USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) cruise which ended in October 1977. The Red Lightnings were decommissioned on 1 March 1978 only to be recommissioned as an F-14 unit with CVW-10 on 1 December 1986. On 29 April 1988 VF-194 became a victim of budget cuts and was decommissioned.

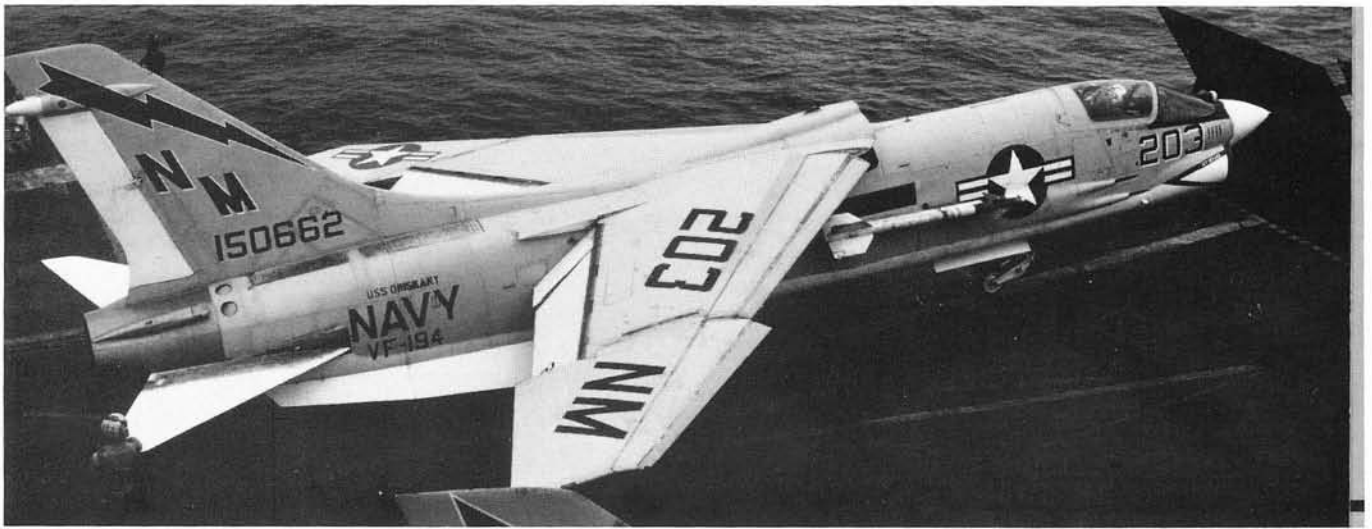
ORISKANY AIR-OPS 1971

At top, Red Lightning F-8J recovers aboard the Oriskany off Vietnam in 1971. VF-194 F-8J 150882 shares elevator with VF-191 F-8J 150871. (Don Priest)



Deck scene aboard CVA-34 with a VF-194 Crusader taxiing past VA-215 Corsairs to its parking space. (Don Priest)





Lt Don Priest waits his turn to launch off the port catapult of the USS Oriskany in 1970 while sitting behind the blast shield in F-8J 150662. The tail lightning bolt is red outlined in white. Also note the double-droop wing used on the F-8J.

THE RED LIGHTNING ROSTER FOR THE 1970 ORISKANY WAR CRUISE

STANDING (left to right): LTJG DAVE CARPOWICH, ENS TOM TUDOR, LT GARY CROWELL, LT AL ERICKSON, LT ROD PARKER, LT DON PRIEST, LT FRED SAGE, LT JON JOHNSON, ?????, LT MIKE BARTOL.

KNEELING: LT DON WALLIS, LT WAYNE DURHAM, LCDR JOE PHANEUF, LCDR LEROY ERMIS, CDR JOE VINTI (CO), CDR JAMES RYAN (XO, who became the CO), LCDR KERMIT JACKSON, LT JOHN ROCKWELL.





Well worn VF-194 F-8J over the Tonkin Gulf; note zinc chromate paint along the wing folds and above the Sidewinder missile.
(Barry Miller)

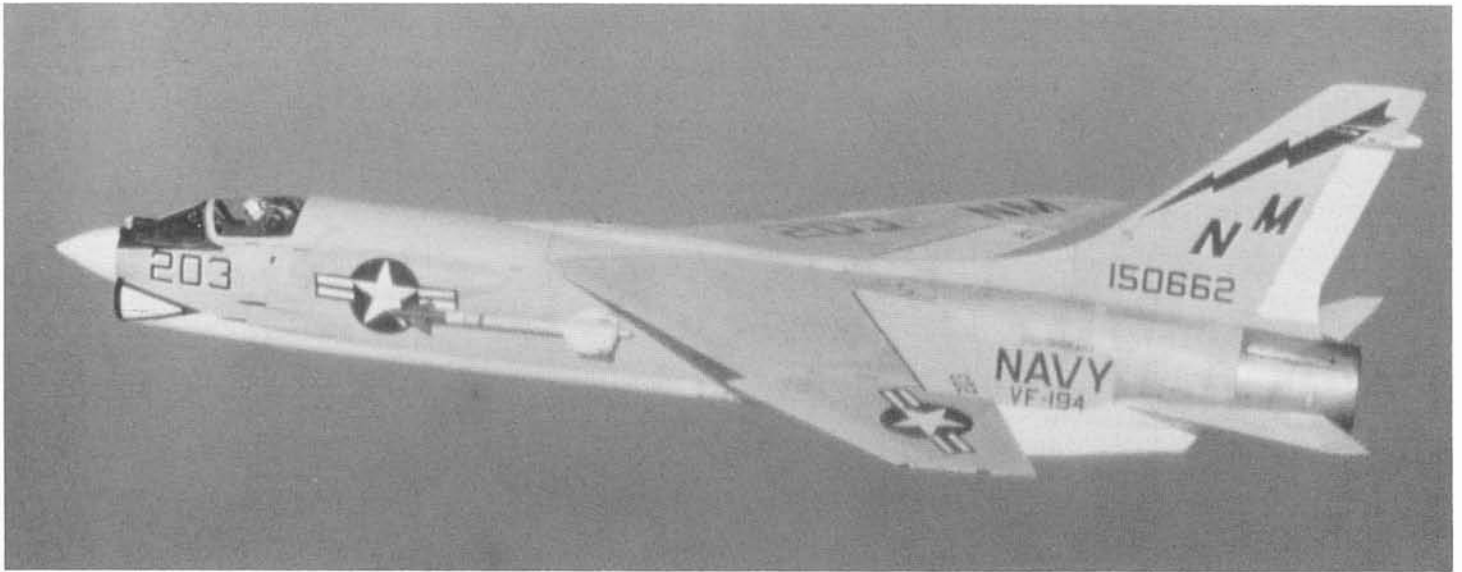
Four VF-194 Crusaders; 149187 #214, 150678 #203, 150325 #207, and 150307 #205 fly into NAS Barbers Point, Hawaii, in 1970.
(Don Priest)





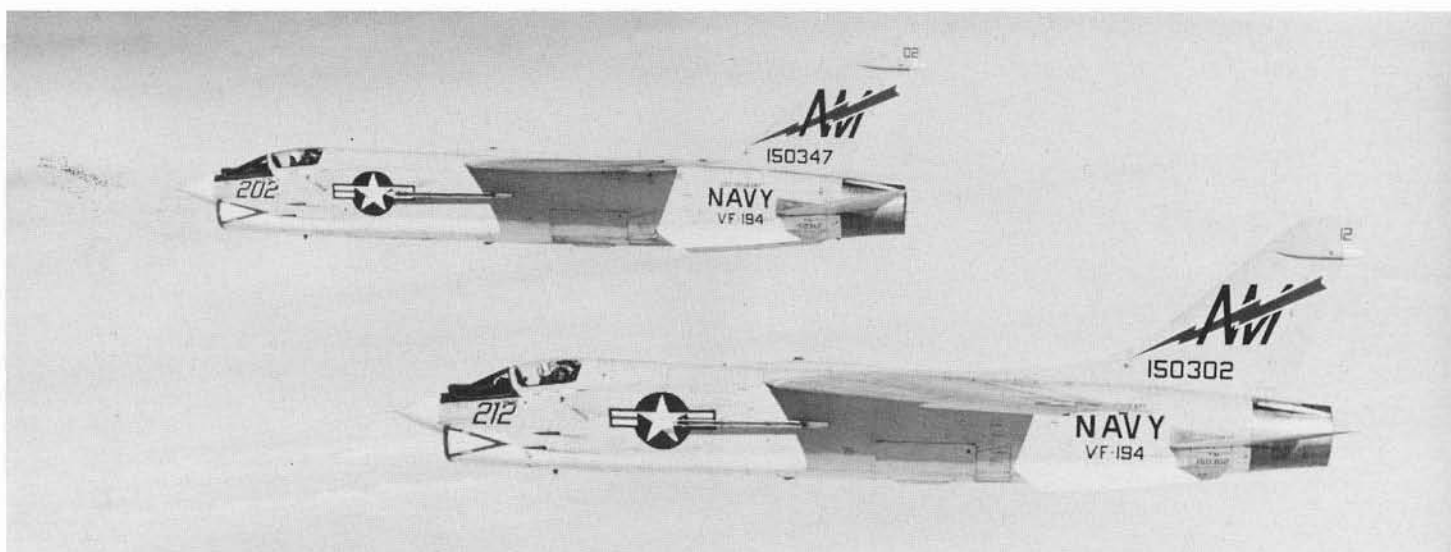
CAG BIRD, F-8J 150683 escorts RC-135M 24135 over the Tonkin Gulf in 1970 (D. Priest) 150683 landing at NAS Atsugi on 22 October 1970; lightning bolts on the rudder are red, yellow, blue, orange, green, and black (T. Matsuzaki) F-8J 150680 was the CAG BIRD in 1971, as seen at Miramar on 4-9-71. (Jansson)





F-8J 150662 in 1970. (Don Priest) Six Red Lightning F-8J Crusaders overfly NAS Miramar in 1971; 149182 #213 (LT Fred Sage), 149175 #204 (LT Al Erickson), 150347 #202 (CDR James Ryan), 150340 #211 (LT Rod Parker), 149177 #206 (LT Don Priest), and 150868 #212 (LT Gary Crowell). (Don Priest)



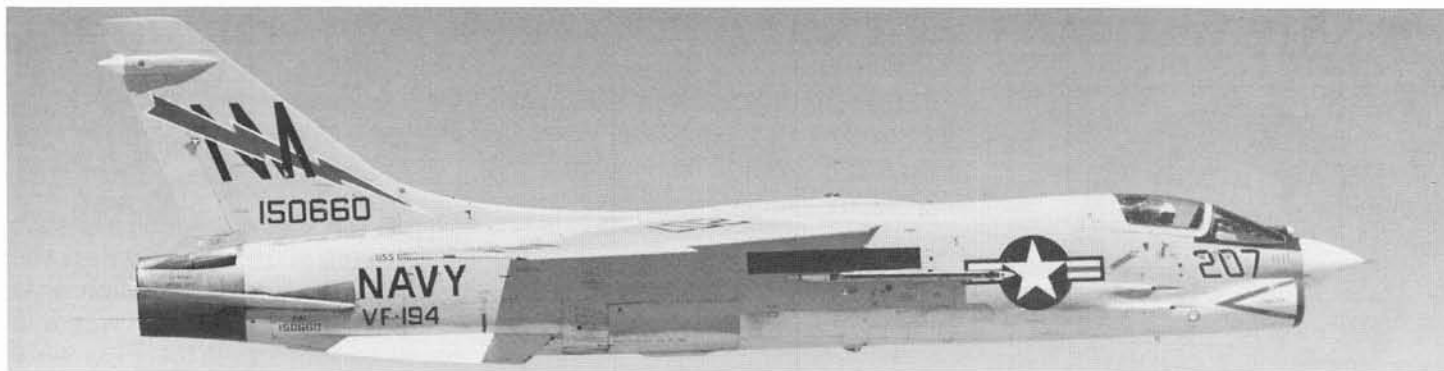


For the 1972 cruise the Red Lightnings' tail codes were enlarged with the lightning bolt passing through it. (USN via Barry Miller)

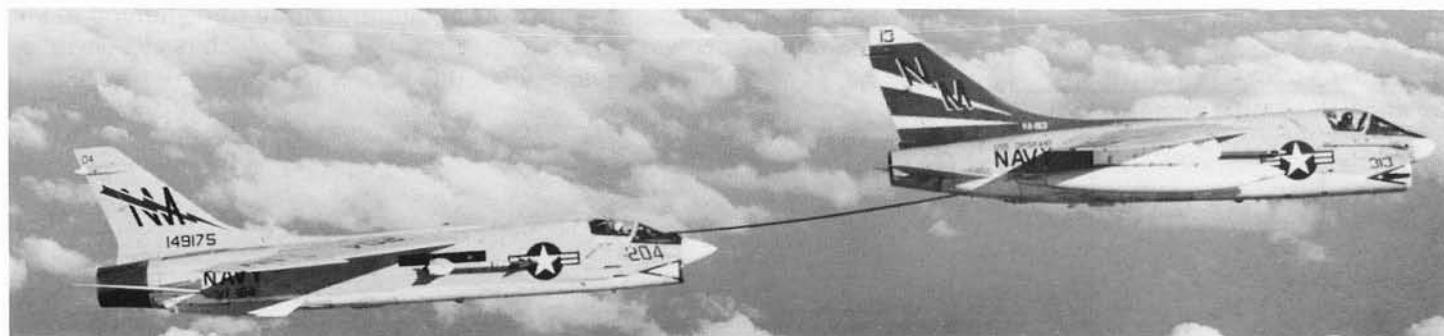
F-8Js 150324 #211 and 150328 #206 fly over Japan on 8 August 1972. (T. Matsuzaki)

F-8J 150324 sits on the ramp at NAS Miramar on 31 March 1972; the red lightning bolt is bordered by white. (Swisher)





F-8J 150660 in 1973 over Southern California . F-8J 149175 refuels from a VA-153 Corsair. (USN via Barry Miller)



F-8J 150328 on 13 March 1976. (Swisher) F-8J 150674, "THE SPIRIT OF 76", on 13 March 1976 after retirement. (Swisher)



FIGHTER SQUADRON TWO ZERO ONE, VF-201 HUNTERS



Under the 1970 reorganization of the Naval Air Reserve Force, VF-201 was commissioned from elements of the disestablished VF-124D1 on 25 July 1970. Fighter squadron 201 was a component of Attack Carrier Air Wing Twenty (CVWR-20) at NAS Dallas, Texas.

Originally outfitted with the F-8K, the squadron's first shipboard operations were conducted aboard the USS Ticonderoga on 14 November 1970 off the coast of Southern California.

On 5 December 1970 the squadron started transitioning to retired fleet F-8Hs.

VF-201 established a reputation of being the most frequently deployed tactical reserve force squadron while flying the F-8 Crusader. It was with some sadness that the F-8s were phased out in favor of F-4N Phantoms in April 1976. In October 1986 the squadron began transitioning to the F-14A Tomcat which is still flown today from NAS Dallas.



VF-201 F-8H 147065 on 4-10-71. Tail flashes were red as was the background for CDR CHUCK BLAKER's name below the canopy rail. The intake lips and stripe around the nose were black and the black nose number was bordered by white.

VF-201 F-8K, nose number 115, being positioned aboard the USS John F. Kennedy (CVA-67) on 8-13-71. The tail markings were enhanced by bordering the red flashes with black. The ventral fin had also been painted with red bordered by black.





Black nosed F-8H 147070 on 5-31-71. CDR JOHN LAMERS COMMANDING OFFICER was painted in white on a red background. "AF" on tail was shaded in red. (Fred Roos) 147070 again in 1974 with a red flash on the ventral fin and the squadron insignia on the rudder. (via Burger) CAG bird, F-8H 148691 in Nov. 1973. Lower fin flash was red-yellow-blue-orange-green. (Buchanan via Menard) F-8H 148698 in 1975. (Fred Roos)

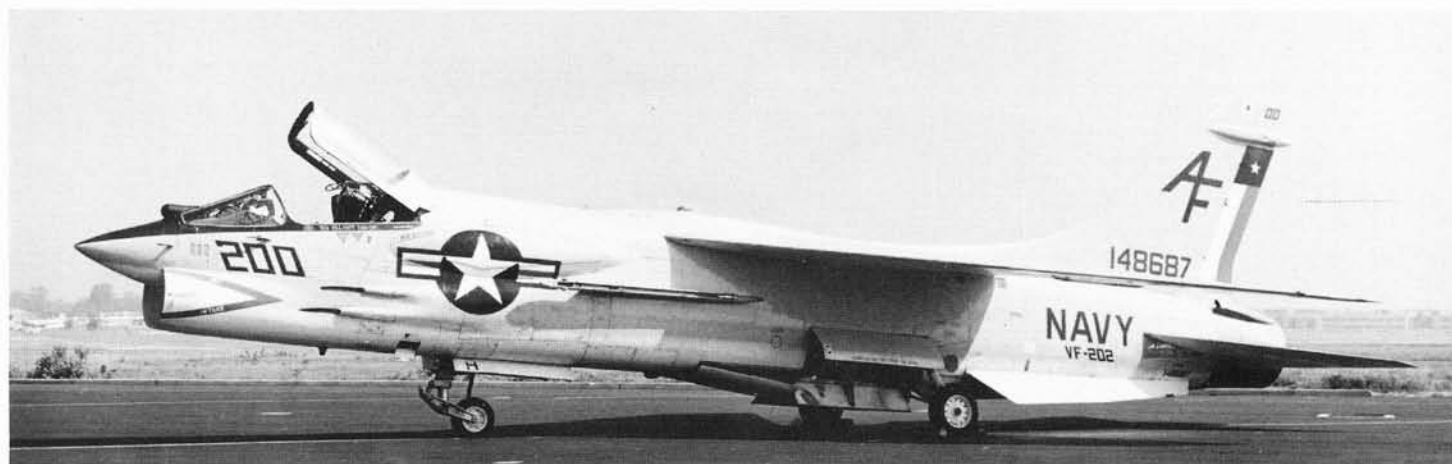


FIGHTER SQUADRON TWO ZERO TWO, VF-202 SUPERHEATS



VF-202 was commissioned on 25 July 1970 from the assets of decommissioned VF-53D2 (see VF-703). The Superheats flew the F-8H until it was replaced with F-4 Phantoms in 1976. The Phantoms gave way to F-14As, which are still flown today.

VF-202 F-8H is launched from the USS Kennedey in August 1971. 202's aircraft had their rudders painted to simulate the Texas flag. (Vought) CDR TEX ELLIOTT CAG-20's F-8H 148687 on 5-20-74. VF-202 insignia was on the fin tip. (Roos)



FIGHTER SQUADRON TWO ONE ONE, VF-211 CHECKERTAILS THE FIRST VF-211



VF-211 was commissioned at NAS Moffett Field, California, in June 1955. The squadron's first aircraft was the North American FJ-3 Fury. As part of CVG-21, the Checkertails deployed aboard the USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) in August 1956.

Once home from its WESTPAC cruise in the spring of 1957, the squadron transitioned to the new supersonic Crusader. On 16 August 1958 the squadron deployed aboard

the recommissioned USS Midway as a component of CVG-2. The cruise, which ended on 8 March 1959, was a WESTPAC deployment to the Philippines, Hong Kong, Okinawa, and Japan. During the cruise, VF-211 performed for Chiang Kai Shek, and for Secretary of Defense McElroy.

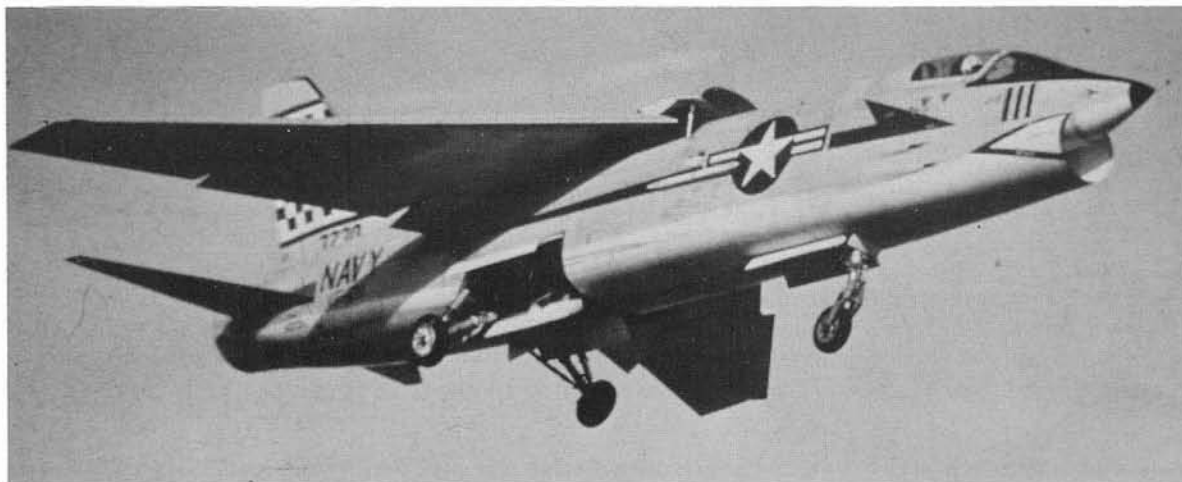
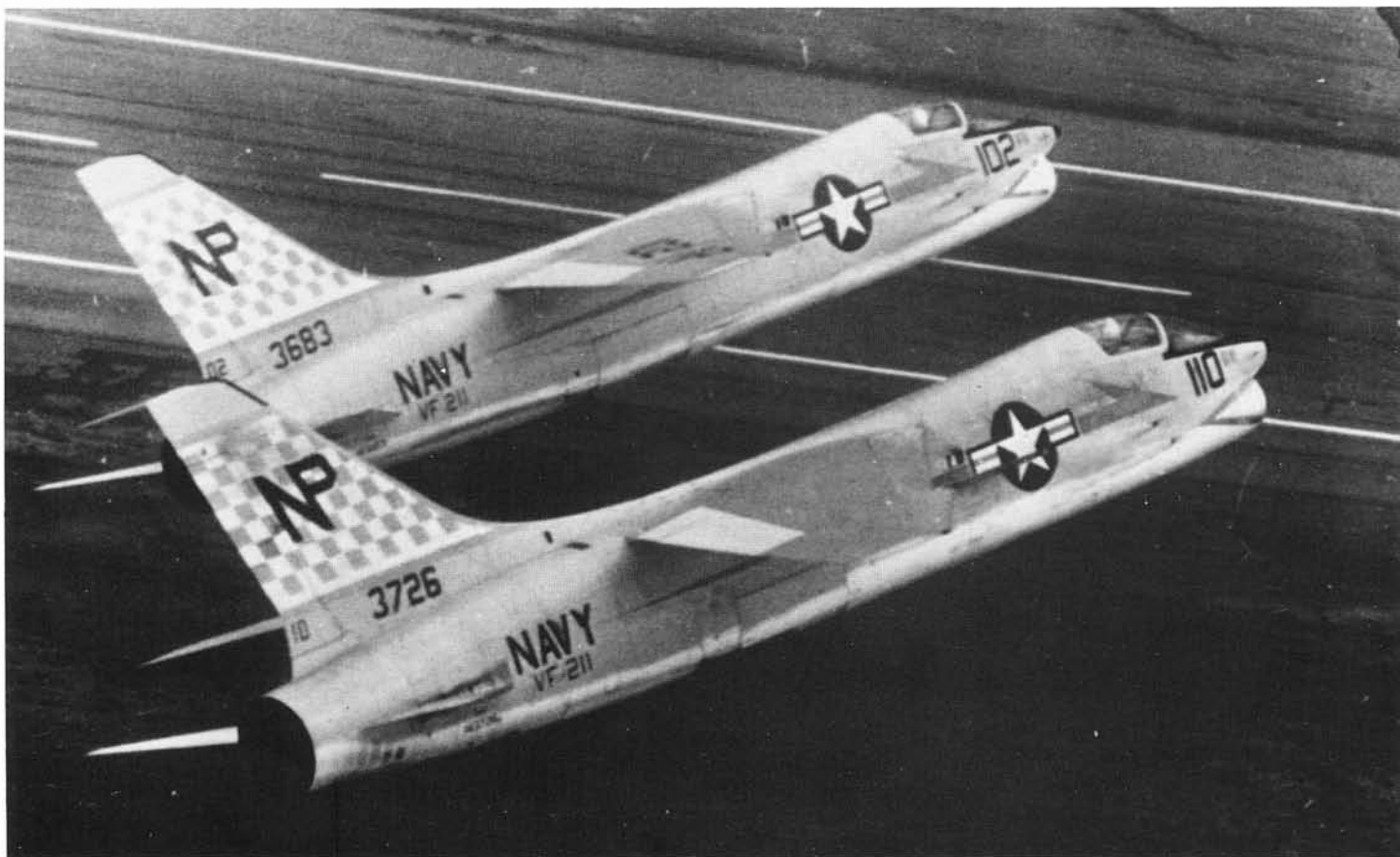
On 9 March 1959, VF-211 was redesignated VF-24 (see VF-24) and VF-24 was redesignated VF-211 (see VF-211 Checkmates).



VF-211 F8U-1 (F-8A) 143683 in August 1957 at NAS Miramar. The Checkertails lived up to their name by having a red and white checkerboard painted on the tail. A long red fuselage flash in the shape of a giant checkmark was also applied. This early F8U-1 has not been refitted with refueling equipment. (Clay Jansson)

VF-211 F8U-1 (F-8A) 143714 at NAS Miramar in August 1957. This aircraft was equipped with refueling gear as can be distinguished by the bulge that starts behind the cockpit and extends through the national insignia. The landing gear on these early F8U-1s were natural metal. Aircraft were wearing CVG-21's "NP" tail code. (Clay Jansson)

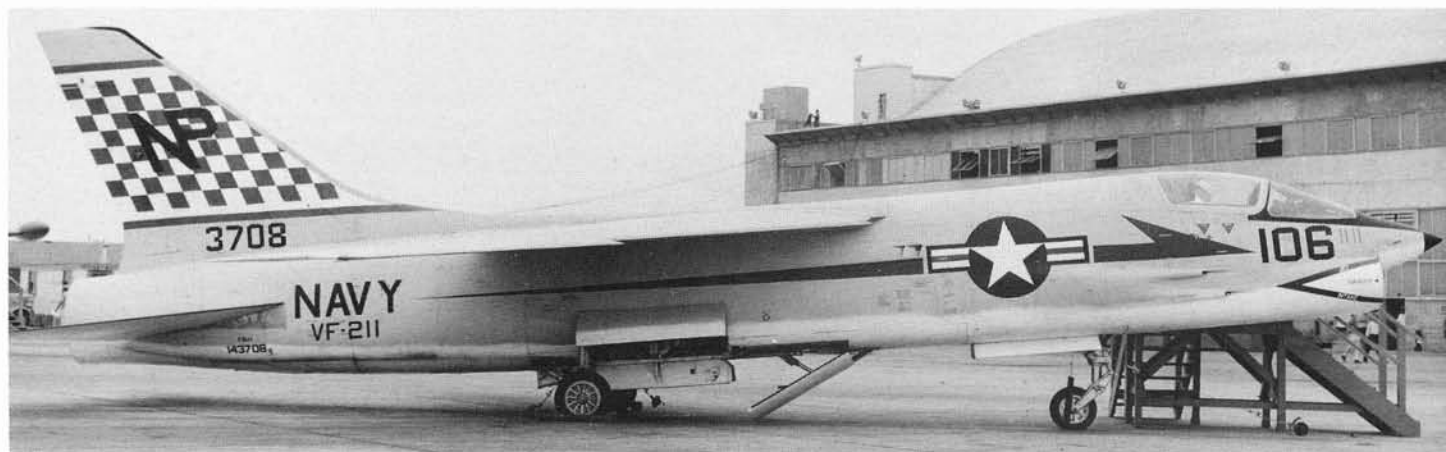


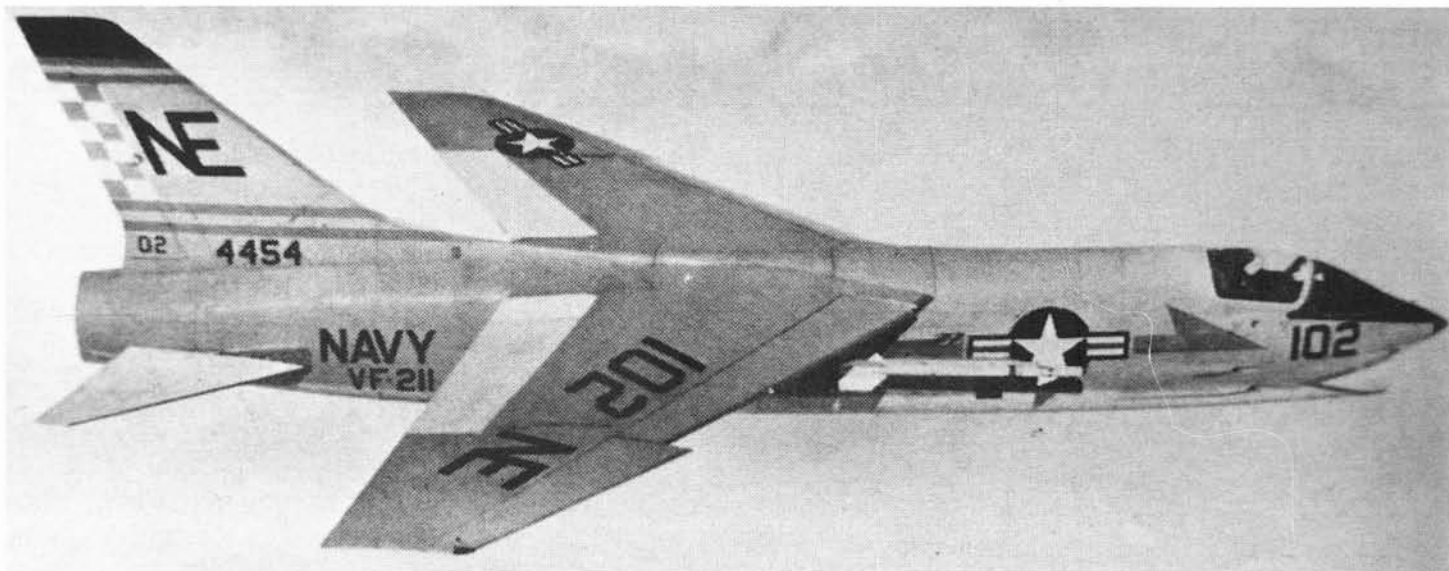


Checkertail 102 and 110, 143683 and 143726 respectively in tight formation over Moffett Field in 1957. (NASM)

VF-211 F8U-1 143730 on final in early 1958. (Vought)

VF-211 F8U-1 143708 at NAS Miramar on 8-10-57. (William T. Larkins)





Checker 102 (144454) with revised tail markings and CVG-2's "NE" tail code as used during the USS Midway 1958-59 deployment. (USN)

Like VF-154, VF-211 experienced the same gear and hook failure problems as evidenced by Checker 104's failed nose gear on the Midway. (USN)

Checkertail F8U-1s 144461 (#105), 143800 (#108), 144451 (#112), and 143794 (#104) fly at 18,000 feet over Mount Fujiyama, Japan. (USN)



FIGHTER SQUADRON TWO ONE ONE, VF-211 FIGHTING CHECKMATES

★ ★ ★ THE SECOND VF-211, ALIAS THE MiG KILLERS ★ ★ ★



The Checkmates became the second F-8 Crusader squadron to be designated VF-211 on 9 March 1959 in what has probably been the most confusing designator swap in naval history. On that same day the first VF-211, the Checkertails, were redesignated VF-24 (see VF-24) and VF-24, the Checkmates, became the second VF-211.

VF-211 was originally commissioned on 1 May 1945 as Bombing Squadron Seventy Four (VB-74) at NAAF Otis Field, Maine, flying Curtiss Helldivers. On 15 November 1946 VB-74 was redesignated VA-1B and the Helldivers were replaced with AD-1 Skyraiders in July 1947. On 1 September 1948, VA-1B was redesignated VA-24 and the AD-1s were upgraded to AD-2s in December. However, continued engine problems with the AD-2s resulted in them being swapped out for F4U-4 Corsairs in February 1949. On 1 December 1949,

while assigned to NAAS Oceana, VA-24 was redesignated VF-24 and transferred to NAS Alameda, California, in June 1950 in preparation for the Korean conflict.

A Korean combat cruise on the USS Boxer (CV-21) was concluded on 9 June 1951 and the squadron transitioned to the Grumman F9F-2 Panther at NALF Santa Rosa, California, prior to the squadron's second Boxer deployment to Korea. This cruise ended on 26 September 1952 when VF-24 returned to NAS Alameda.

The squadron was upgraded to the F9F-6 Cougar which in turn were replaced by FJ-3 and FJ-3M Furys in late 1955. The highly maneuverable Furys were phased out in the summer of 1957 for the all-weather F3H-2M Demon. Then during Christmas week of 1958 the Demons were replaced by Grumman F11F-1 Tigers and the squadron was relocated to NAS Moffett Field, California.

On 9 March 1959 VF-24 switched squadron designations with VF-211, becoming VF-211 Checkmates, the designation still used today. The squadron's association with the Crusader started in December 1959 when the F11F-1s were replaced by F8U-1s (F-8As). The squadron would go on to fly various models of the Crusader for the next sixteen years and make twelve carrier deployments including seven Vietnam combat cruises up till December 1975 when the F-14A

Tomcat replaced the Crusader.

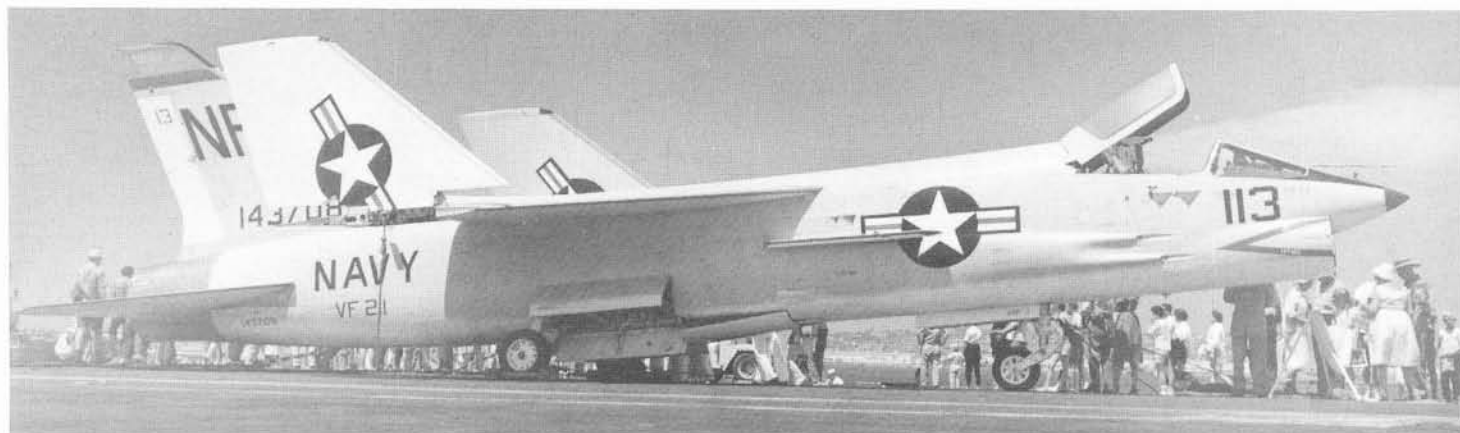
The squadron became known as the Fighting Checkmates and as the MiG Killers, with seven confirmed kills and one probable, including both the first and the last F-8 kill. VF-211 was second in MiG kills only to VF-96's F-4 Phantoms who had ten kills including Cunningham and Driscoll's five.

VF-211 took their F8U-1s aboard the USS Lexington (CVA-16) on 29 October 1960 for the squadron's first WESTPAC cruise in the type. The cruise ended on 5 June 1961 and the squadron was relocated to NAS Miramar, California, by the end of the month.

This deployment was followed by two more F8U-1 (F-8A) cruises. Both cruises were aboard the USS Hancock (CVA-19) and were conducted from 2-2-62 through 8-20-62 and from 6-7-63 through 12-16-63.

After the 1963 cruise, the squadron began to replace its F-8As with the all-weather F-8E in February 1964. The first F-8E deployment started on 10-21-64 aboard the Hancock. The Hanna was operating off Southeast Asia when VF-211 became the first U.S. fighter squadron to encounter MiGs over North Vietnam. The squadron took part in retaliatory air strikes in

VF-211 F8U-1 143708 aboard the Coral Sea, at NAS North Island, on 8-19-61. The only marking was a thin red stripe below the tan fin cap. (Swisher)





VF-211 F8U-1 144436 at North Island on 8-25-62. A red and white checkerboard rudder and a red stripe below the fin tip as well as a red kangaroo adorn the tail. (Jansson) F-8A 143743 at NAS Miramar on 1-19-63. (Jansson) F-8A 143701 with speed brake extended and dumping fuel in preparation for recovery aboard the Hancock on 3-26-63. (USN) F-8A 145363 landing at NAS Atsugi on 9-19-63. USS HANCOCK is painted in red above NAVY on the aft fuselage. (T. Matsuzaki)





February 1965 against Dong Hoi.

The squadron returned to Miramar on 29 May 1965 and after a quick turnaround were back to sea on 10 November. It would be during this eventful cruise that VF-211 would start earning the MiG Killer name. Three confirmed and one probable kill as well as the first F-8 MiG kill would occur.

The first MiG would be killed by the squadron's CO, CDR Harold L. Marr, in F-8E 150924 on 12 June 1966. A probable kill was also scored that same day by CDR Marr. Nine days later CDR Marr's wingman LTJG Phil Vampatella, flying the same aircraft (150924), downed the squadron's second MiG-17 during a photo mission turned search and rescue

VF-211 F-8E 150909 landing at NAS Atsugi on 11-24-64. (T. Matsuzaki)

when LT C. Eastman from VFP-63 in RF-8A 146830 and LT C. Black from VF-211 in F-8E 149152 were shot down. In spite of Vampatella's efforts both Eastman and Black became POWs.

LTJG Vampatella and his flight of four Crusaders were called in to cover LT Eastman's rescue attempt. Vampatella's horizontal stabilizer was hit by 37mm during the attempt and being low on fuel, he and his wingman were departing for a tanker when they were alerted to incoming MiGs. Turning back to the threat Vampatella found he was unable to keep up with his section leader due to his flak damage. He arrived at the fight 30 seconds after his leader and spotted a MiG-17 tailing LT Black. He shouted a warning but the MiG downed his shipmate. He then spotted a second MiG trying to gain firing position on him. He dove for the deck in a tight turn pulling out just

VF-211 F-8A CAG bird (144428) at NAF Litchfield Park, Arizona, on 3-23-64. Stars on the rudder were in the Air Wings colors. (William Swisher)

above the trees, and checked his six to see the MiG heading for home. He turned again and closed rapidly on the unsuspecting MiG and fired a Sidewinder for the squadron's second victory. For his action Vampatella was awarded the second Navy Cross issued to a Naval Aviator in Vietnam.

CDR Harold L. Marr, right, is congratulated by his wingman, LTJG Phil Vampatella, after downing a MiG-17 on 6-12-66 with F-8E 150924 in the background. Nine days later, on 6-21-66, Vampatella would down his own MiG while flying 150924. (USN)





VF-211 IN 1965

VF-211 CAG bird, F-8E 150891 on 8-7-65. Multi-colored stars and "?" mark were painted on the red and white rudder. Squadron insignia was also located on the tail. (Clay Jansson)



VF-211 F-8E 150916 at Miramar on 8-7-65. Like 150891 above, the aircraft was armed with Zuni rocket tubes on the lower "Y" rack rail. (William Swisher)

VF-211 F-8E 149210 on 8-7-65. This Hancock based Crusader was armed with four Zunis per fuselage side. (Clay Jansson)





On the same day Vampatella shot down his MiG-17, LT E. J. Chancy bagged one too, just five minutes later. Chancy (Gene), who was also involved in the rescue attempt, scored his kill with a AIM-9D Sidewinder while flying F-8E 150867. This kill enabled Chancy to settle up for being shot down by North Vietnamese AAA on 2 May 1966 while flying 149169.

Two more Checkmate Crusaders were shot down during this cruise. LTJG T. E. Brown was killed on 29 April 1966 during combat over the north in 150867, and LT L. S. Miller was recovered on 23 May after AAA had hit 150901. A third F-8E, 150891, was lost on 24 December 1965 during normal flight operations.

The squadron returned to Miramar on 1 August 1966 to regroup for another cruise. This cruise aboard the USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31)

VF-211 F-8E 149193 taxiing in after gunnery practice as evidenced by the gun powder stains surrounding the lower gun ports. (Vought)

lasted from 26 January 1967 until 25 August 1967.

During this cruise the squadron's scores continued to rise. LCDR M. O. Wright scored first on 1 May 1967, when a MiG-17 was clobbered by a Sidewinder fired from "Moe's" F-8E 150303. A few weeks later, on 19 May, the squadron's CO CDR Paul Speer in 150348 and LTJG Joseph Shea in 150661 scored another double kill for VF-211. For his kill, Shea employed the unusual tactic of herding the MiG into firing position for his Sidewinder by firing short bursts with his 20 mike mike. A fourth occurred on 21 July when LCDR Ray G. (Tim) Hubbard downed a MiG-17D with both cannon and Zuni fire while flying 150859.

The squadron ended the cruise with four confirmed kills and four losses, none of which were to MiGs. 150930 was downed by a SAM on 19 May 1967 which resulted in LCDR K. Russell becoming a POW. On 21 May LCDR Hubbard was shot down in 150348 by AAA prior to his 21 July

LTJG TOM HALL taxiing forward in his F-8E on 4-25-67. (USN) F-8E 150352 catapults from the Hancock on 5-24-67. 150352 would be the aircraft in which Hall was shot down in on 6-10-67. (USN)



CDR Paul Speer and LTJG Joseph Shea, 5-19-67 MiG Killers. (USN)

MiG kill. Then on 6 June LTJG T. R. Hall was downed in 150303 and recovered only to again be downed in 150352 on 10 June. The second time around Hall was not so lucky as he was captured and became a POW.





CDR PAUL SPEER, VF-211 CO's F-8E 149150 on 8-26-67. On return from the 1967 cruise, VF-211 F-8s carried six red kill marks with yellow stars on the ventral fin. Another kill mark is under the pilot's name. This was a personal kill, not this aircraft's. (Jansson) 149146 with LCDR TIM HUBBARD's name and kill marking on the nose. (Jansson) CDR R. B. RUTHERFORD's 150351. (Jansson) VF-211 CAG bird with the name CDR JACK MONGER painted on the canopy rail. (Jansson)





For the 1968-69 cruise the MiG Killers returned to the Hancock. The squadron sailed for Vietnam on 18 July 1968 and returned on 3 March 1969. The F-8H (remanufactured F-8D) was used for this deployment. But the fresh mounts encountered no MiGs during this relatively uneventful

cruise. Two aircraft, 148694 and 147923, were lost on 24 August and 15 November respectively during operational accidents.

After returning to Miramar the squadron traded their F-8Hs for F-8Js (remanufactured F-8Es) in preparation

Two VF-211 F-8Es, 149175 (#103) and 150923 (#102), refueling with a KA-3B. (via Jansson) F-8H 148659 on 5-24-68. For the 1968-69 cruise, the F-8H was used and VF-211 returned to the Hancock. (Jansson) F-8J 150680 on 7-31-69 with revised markings. For the 1969-70 cruise and all subsequent cruises the F-8J was used. (Swisher)





for the 1969-70 cruise. Even though no MiGs were downed during the previous cruise, VF-211 were still the number one MiG Killers in the Navy, a position they held until Cunningham and Driscoll bagged three out of four MiGs downed by VF-96 Phantoms on 5 October 1972. During the cruise, which lasted from 21 August 1969 until 6 April 1970, VF-211 lost only one aircraft (150349) on 28 November 1969.

The squadron deployed again from 22 October 1970 until 2 June 1971 during which time two F-8Js, 149197 and 150294, were lost due to operational accidents. For the third time MiGs were not encountered.

The squadron's seventh and final combat cruise took place from 7 January 1972 until 3 October 1972. On 22 April a lone MiG-17 was spotted by LCDR Frank Bachman and LT Jerry Tucker, but as the MiG Killers rolled in on him at a half-mile out, he nosed over and bailed out. Unfortunately this was not listed as an official kill, but it would be the last MiG downed by a Crusader.

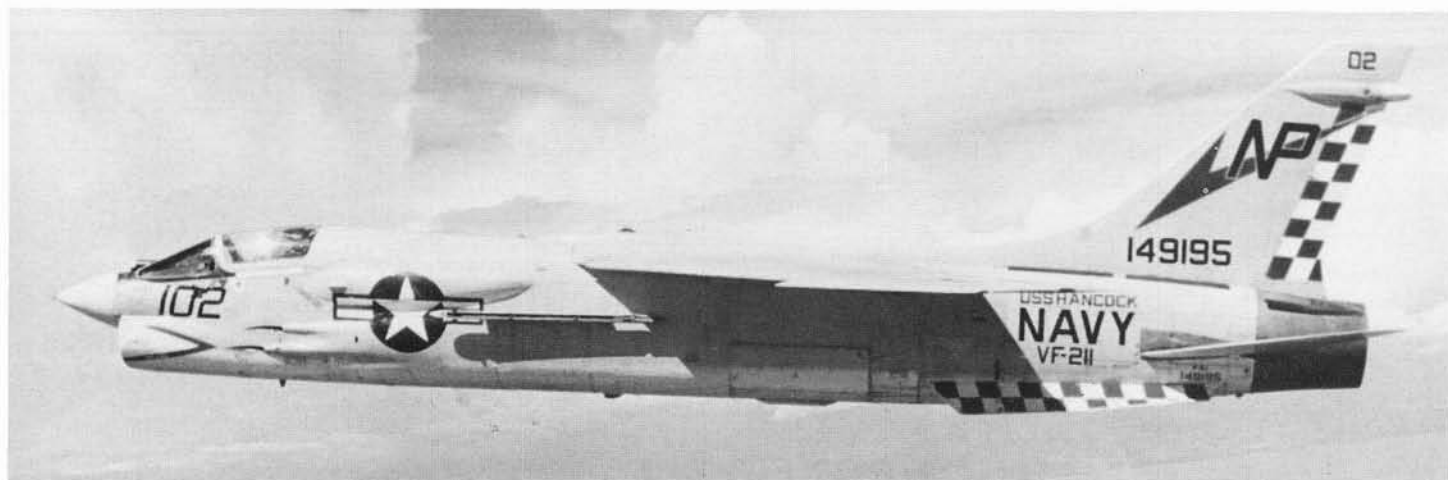
The next cruise, which started on 8 May 1973, was once again to the Tonkin Gulf, where the squadron took part in Operation End Sweep Support Carrier. The cruise was to have ended on 15 August but was extended while the Hancock took part in the Mid-East

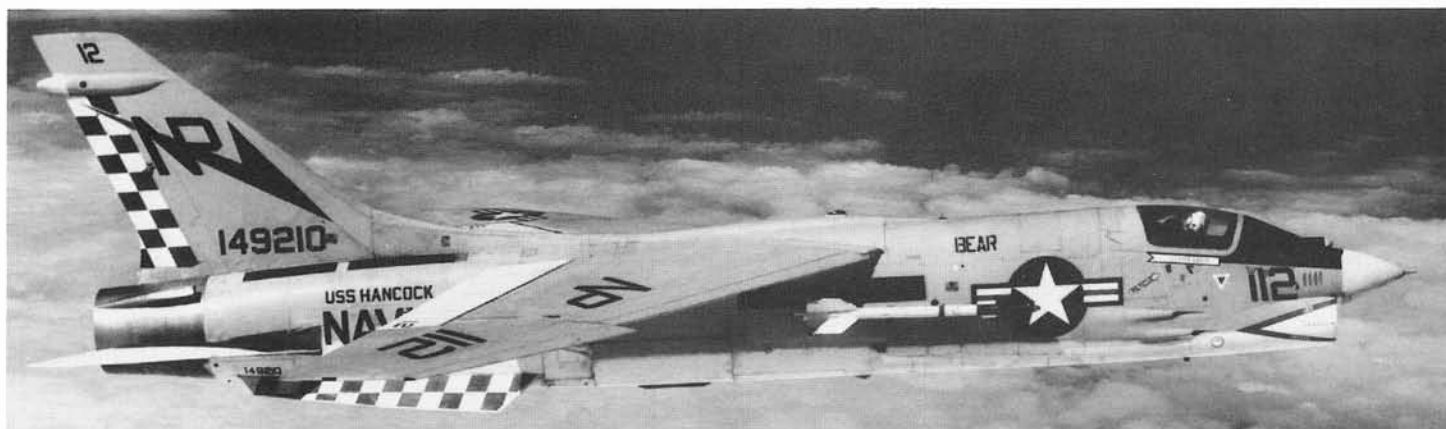
LCDR JOHN McCARTHY's F-8J 150294 aboard the Hancock on 7-31-69, two days before sailing to Vietnam. 150294 would be lost on 3-16-71 during an operational accident. (William Swisher)

crises. The squadron returned on 8 January 1974.

One last Crusader cruise took place from 18 May 1975 until 20 October 1975, after which the MiG Killers transitioned to the Grumman F-14A Tomcat in December.

VF-211 F-8J 149195 in flight in 1971. When the squadron transitioned to the F-8Js, a large red check mark was added to the tail and the ventral fins were painted red and white. (Barry Miller)





VF-211 F-8J 149210 patrols the Tonkin Gulf on 3-18-71. The name LT RICK AMBER was painted below the canopy rail and BEAR was painted on the fuselage aft of the cockpit. (USN)
 VF-211 F-8J at Da Nang in November 1970. The name LTJG BRIAN FOYE was painted below the canopy rail and FOYBOY was painted on the fuselage aft of the cockpit. (Barry Miller)
 VF-211 F-8J 149186 at NAS Lemoore on 10-10-71. The cannon ports were red and the name LT JERRY TUCKER was painted below the canopy rail. (D. Kasulka via Fred Roos)
 VF-211 F-8J 149216 over the Grand Cyn. in 1970-71. (Don Priest)





VF-211 F-8J 149220 at NAS Miramar on 2-9-75. The gun ports were stained with powder burns. (Clay Jansson)



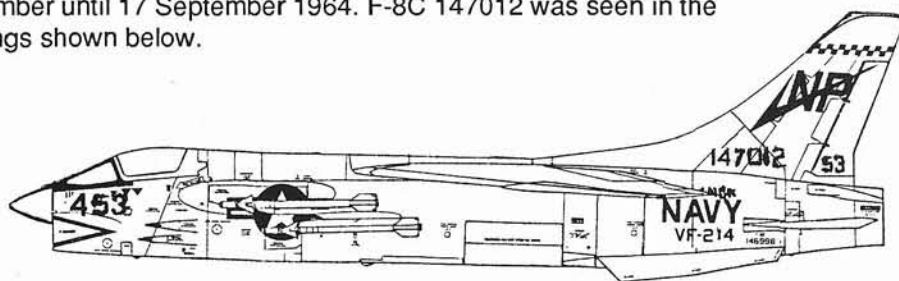
May 1975 overhead view of four VF-211 F-8J Crusaders over Hawaii. Compare the wing codes shown here with those seen on the previous pages. (USN)



FIGHTER SQUADRON TWO ONE FOUR, VF-214



VF-214 existed as a temporary redesignation of VF-24, from 1 September until 17 September 1964. F-8C 147012 was seen in the markings shown below.



FIGHTER SQUADRON THREE ZERO ONE, DEVIL'S DISCIPLES



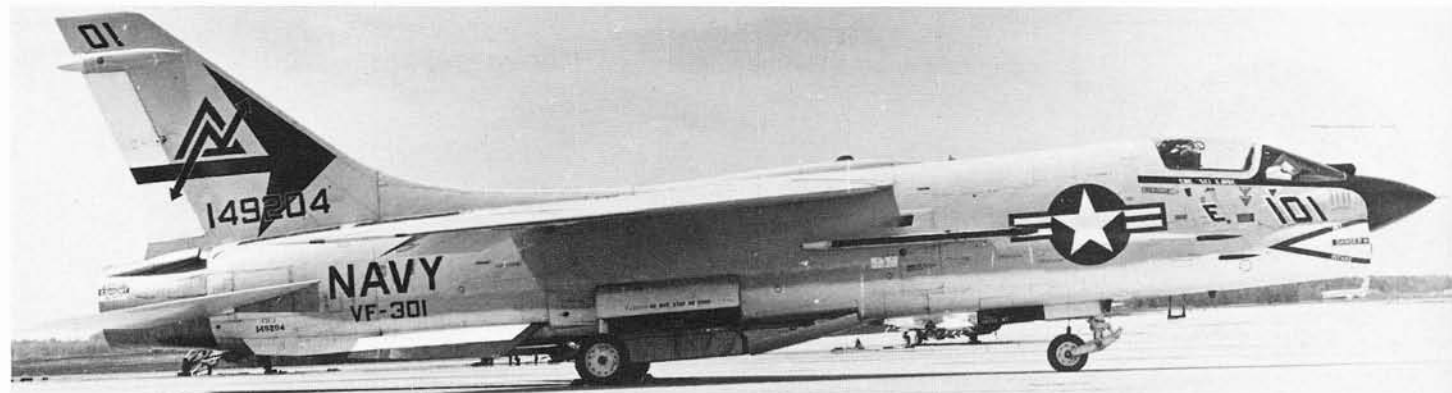
With the reorganization of the reserves, Reserve Carrier Air Wing Thirty (CVWR-30) and VF-301 were commissioned on 1 October 1970 at NAS Miramar, California. The Devil's Disciples were equipped with F-8J Crusaders and flew the type until 13 June 1974 when McDonnell F-4B Phantoms replaced them.

VF-301 holds the distinction of being the only accident-free Navy F-8 fighter squadron. From 1 October 1970 until 13 June 1974 the Disciples

accumulated 14,289 accident free hours.

VF-301 would go on to fly the F-4B, F-4N, F-4S and the F-14A which it first acquired in October 1984. The squadron still flies the Tomcat today.

VF-301 F-8J 150844 in 1972 with the name LCDR FERGUSON on the nose. (D. Kasulka) LCDR CASEY's 149139 on 3-31-72. (Swisher) 149204 in 1973. 301's markings were a red ventral fin flash and tail arrow that were bordered in black. All other markings were black.

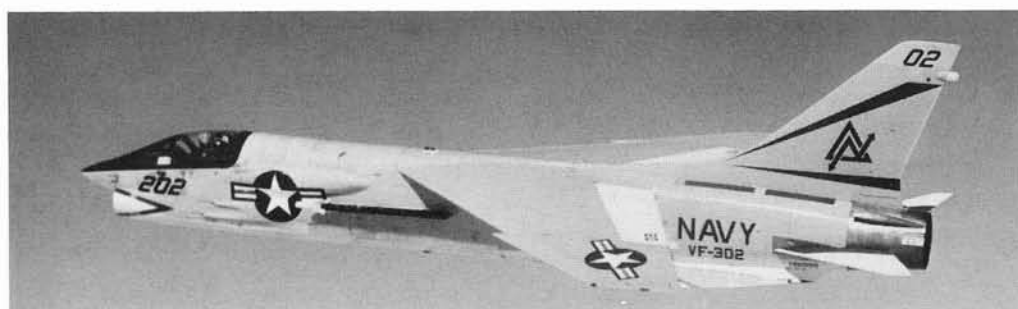


FIGHTER SQUADRON THREE ZERO TWO, VF-302 STALLIONS



The Stallions of VF-302 became Reserve Carrier Air Wing Thirty's (CVWR-30) second fighter squadron on 21 May 1971. Stationed at NAS Miramar and equipped with the F-8K and F-8J Crusader, VF-302 flew the type until November 1973 when it was replaced by the F-4B Phantom. From the F-4B, the Stallions went on to fly the F-4N, F-4S, and finally the F-14A Tomcat which it acquired in 1985.

CDR BILL KIPER's F-8K 147007 at NAS Miramar on 5-12-73. (Fred Roos)



VF-302 F-8K 146986 in flight over Southern California with a dummy Sidewinder mounted on the fuselage. (USN via Barry Miller) VF-302 F-8J 150654 at Miramar in 1972. (D. Kasulka via Jansson)

VF-302 markings were yellow tail and ventral fin flashes bordered by wide black bands, with all other markings being black.



FIGHTER SQUADRON SIX SIX ONE, VF-661 FIREFIGHTERS



Based at Andrews AFB and flying the FJ-4B (AF-1E) Fury since May 1962, VF-661 transitioned to the F-8A and F-8B Crusaders in January 1965. Initially VF-661 and its Marine counterpart, VMF-321, shared aircraft, hence the Navy and Marine on the fuselage.

On 22 January 1968, the US Intelligence Collection Ship, USS Pueblo, was seized by North Korean patrol boats causing what is known today as the Pueblo Crisis. The president's response to this crisis was to

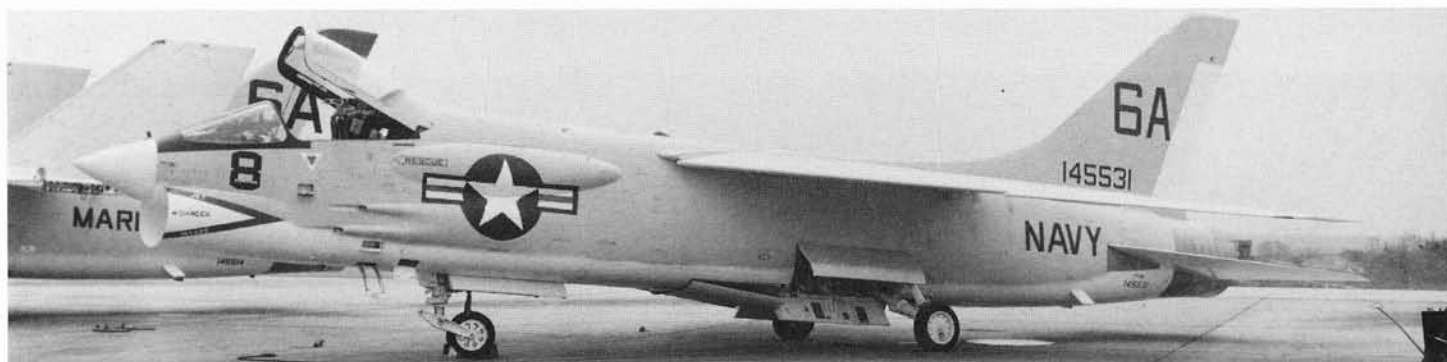
activate six Naval Air Reserve Squadrons and VF-661 was one of them. The squadrons were called to active duty on 26 January and on 27 January the commanding officer, CDR Lemuel O. Warfield, was welcoming his assembled squadron aboard. The squadron transferred to NAS Cecil Field, Florida, where they were assigned to CVW-8 with their "AJ" tail code.

During the second week in August the squadron's F-8Bs were replaced by factory-fresh F-8Hs. The squadron

CDR Warfield boards a VF-661 F-8H for the first east coast operational F-8H flight on 8-11-68. (USN via Warfield)

was upgraded in preparation for a deployment aboard the USS Shangri-La (CVA-38) in which the squadron was to have replaced VF-13 for a Med cruise. Instead VF-661 was released from active duty on 19 September 1968 and decommissioned on 11 October.

VF-661 F-8Bs at Andrews in 1965.(C. J.)





F-8A 143817 at Andrews AFB on 6-2-67 with 6A tail code and NAVY MARINE on the fuselage denoting its joint usage by VF-661 and VMF-321. Note aircraft has been used for gunnery as evidenced by the blackened cannon ports. (William Swisher) F-8A 143809 at Andrews AFB on 6-2-67, with aircraft # 10 above the rudder and with a flat black fin tip. (Clay Jansson)



F-8A 145408 of VF-661 after activation. The CVW-8 AJ tail code has replaced the former 6A tail code. (Ostrowski via DM)

VF-661 squadron photo at NAS Cecil Field in August 1968 with F-8H 147047 in the background. (USN via CAPT Warfield)





In-flight photos of VF-661 F-8Hs with full markings consisting of red ventral fin flashes bordered by black and black tail stripes with a white AJ tail code on a red field. F-8Hs 147049 (#100), 147047 (#101), 148657 (#102), and 148677 (#110). (USN via CAPT "BUZ" Warfield)



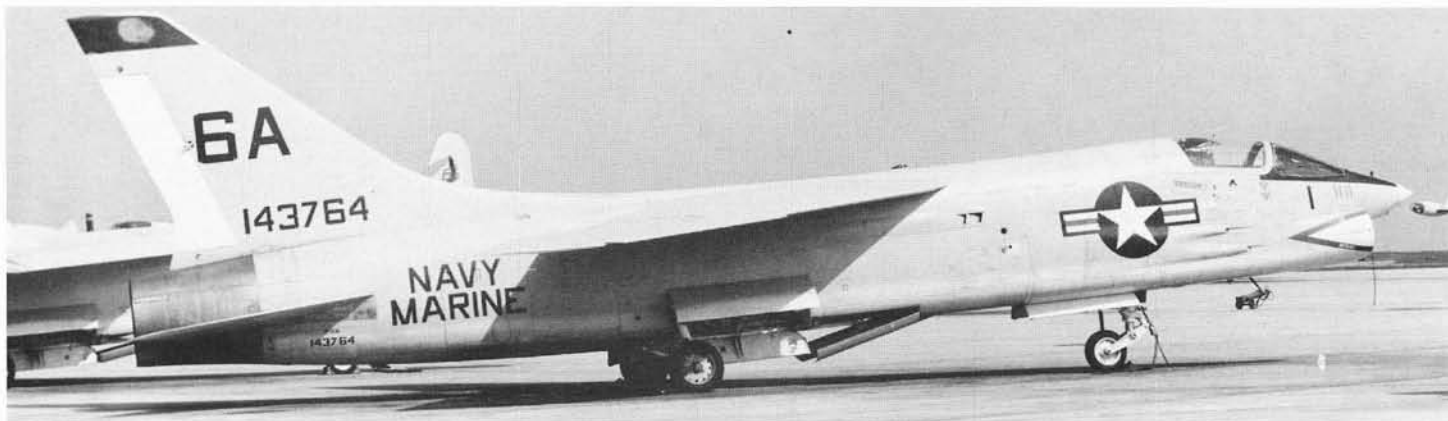
FIGHTER SQUADRON SIX SIX TWO, VF-662 (VF-11A1)



Generic F-8s with both MARINES and NAVY painted on the rear fuselage were used by the Andrews-based VF-661, VF-662, and VMF-321 as seen here. F-8B 145421 with gold cross on the flat black fin tip and a black and red rudder stripe as well as a black cactus and three hash marks, date and place unknown. (via Burger) F-8B 145454 with black gun troughs at NAF Washington in 1965. (Esposito via Jansson) F-8A 143764 at NAF Washington (Andrews AFB) on 6-2-67. (Jansson) F-8A 143698 with wing raised and folded, date and place unknown. (Dave Ostrowski)

VF-662 transitioned from F6F-5 Hellcats to F8F-1 Bearcats in October 1950 and to F4U Corsairs in January 1954. The squadron was redesignated VA-662 in 1955 when AD-5 and AD-4 Skyraiders replaced the Corsairs. The FJ-4B was acquired in July 1962 and the squadron was redesignated VF-662 in January 1965 when the F-8B Crusader

was acquired. The F-8A arrived in March 1967 and the squadron was merged with VF-661 in December 1967. When VF-661 was called to active duty on 27 January 1968, VF-662 re-emerged as VF-11A1 and operated Crusaders until being broken up to form VFP-206 and VFP-306 in June 1970.



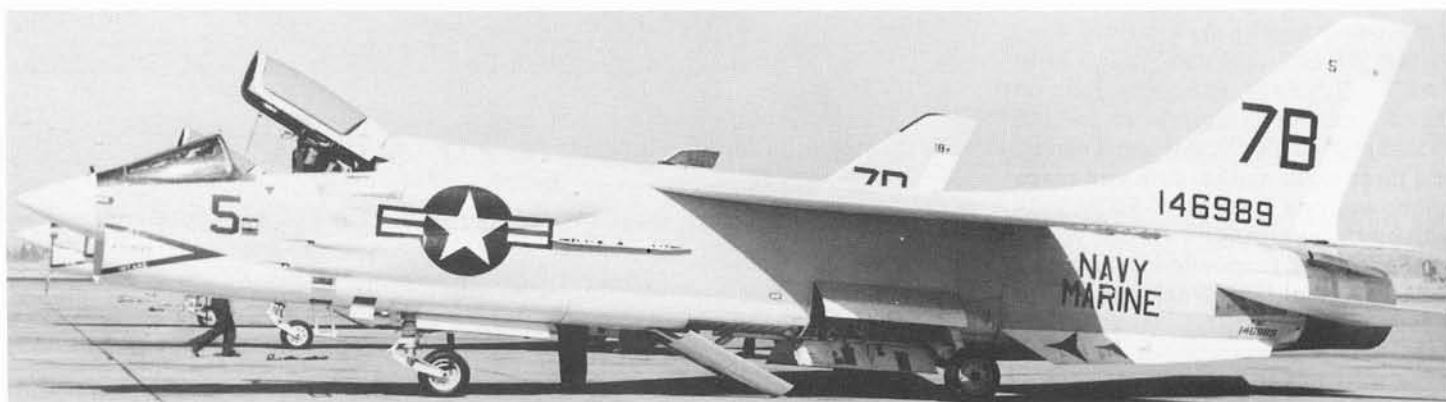
FIGHTER SQUADRONS SIX SEVEN TWO AND SIX SEVEN THREE, VF-672 (VF-31B2) AND VF-673 (VF-31B3)



NAS Atlanta, Georgia, was home to VF-672, VF-673 and VMF-351. All three squadrons shared the same aircraft during the 1960s, with NAVY and MARINE usually painted on the aft section of each aircraft. The first F-8A started to replace the three squadron's AF-1E Furies in February 1965. Some F-8Cs were acquired in 1966 and some F-8Ls in 1969. In late 1968 VF-672 and VF-673 were redesignated VF-31B2 and VF-31B3 respectively. VF-31B2 was awarded the CNO Safety Award for 1969, just prior to the

squadron being decommissioned in June 1970.

VF-672 took this F-8C to MCAS Yuma, Arizona, in 1966. 146989 has what is believed to be red stylized arrowheads painted on the ventral fin. (Al Adams via Jansson) Atlanta-based F-8A 145345 with only NAVY painted on the rear fuselage was seen at Andrews AFB on 6-2-67. (Clay Jansson) The end of the line. F-8A 145392 on display at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, on 3-16-70. (Clay Jansson)



FIGHTER SQUADRON SEVEN ZERO ONE, VF-701 HUNTERS



Commissioned in 1960, VF-701, a NAS Dallas, Texas, based Naval Air Reserve fighter squadron initially flew the North American FJ-3 Fury. This was upgraded to the FJ-4B (AF-1E) Fury in 1963. The first F-8A Crusader was assigned to Dallas and its reserve squadrons; VF-701, VF-703, VMF-111, and VMF-112 in January 1964. F-8Cs and F-8Ks were also utilized. In June 1969 VF-701 was redesignated VF-124D1 and then decommissioned on 1 July 1970 when the squadron's assets were used to create VF-201.



F-8A 143755 (#61) and sister F-8A (#57) making touch-and-go landings at NAS Dallas, Texas, during FAM checkouts for squadron pilots in 1964. (USN) F-8A 143743 as shared by VF-701, VF-703 and VMF-112 (VMF-111 had been deactivated on 10-22-65) on 9-24-66 at NAS Dallas. (Clay Jansson) F-8K 146997 as shared by VF-701 (VF-124D1) and VMF-112 (VF-703 was equipped with F-8Hs) at NAS North Island on 2-14-70. The F-8Ks would be used in VF-201. (Clay Jansson)



FIGHTER SQUADRON SEVEN ZERO THREE, VF-703 SUPERHEATS



VF-703, like its sister squadron VF-701 (see VF-701), was stationed at NAS Dallas, Texas, and shared the same aircraft until 27 January 1968. On that date the squadron was called to active duty along with two other Crusader units, VF-661 and VF-931. The call to duty took place in response to the North Koreans seizing the US intelligence ship USS Pueblo. Unlike VF-661 and VF-931 which were assigned to the Atlantic Fleet, VF-703 was scheduled to deploy to Vietnam as the relief unit for VF-111 DET11

aboard the USS Intrepid. Before this could take place, VF-703 was released from active duty on 19 September 1968. In June 1969 the squadron was redesignated VF-53D2. VF-53D2 was decommissioned a year later and its assets formed the nucleus for VF-202.



NAS DALLAS display aircraft on 9-24-66. The tail # 140448 indicates the 8th F-8A built. This aircraft became one of two YF-8C prototypes and was used exclusively by Vought, until given to NAS. (Clay Jansson) F-8A 145330 at MCAS Yuma in July 1965 during gunnery training as indicated by the heavy gun port stains. (A. Haftner via Fred Roos) F-8A 145318 at MCAS Yuma in 1966. Previous unit's squadron markings had been painted out prior to delivery to Dallas. (Al Adams)





When VF-703 was called to active duty, an interim tail code "NR" was assigned to the squadron. F-8A 145370 at NAS Miramar on 7-27-68. The F-8As were traded in for factory -fresh F-8Hs as seen below. (Clay Jansson)

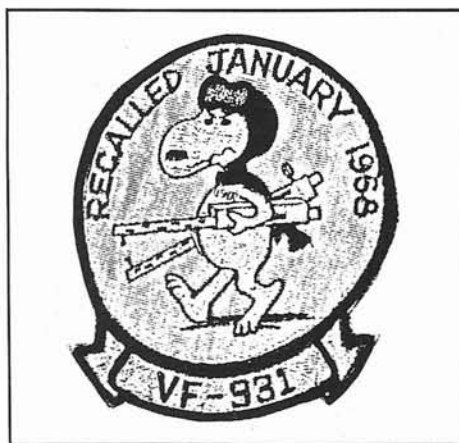
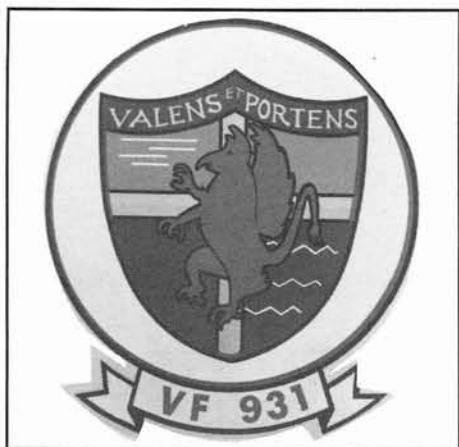


VF-703 F-8H 147914 at Miramar on 7-27-68 with factory-fresh paint and CVW-10's "AH" tail code. The upper portion of the rudder was Navy blue with a white star, to signify the Lone Star State, Texas. (Clay Jansson)

F-8K 146966 taxiing at NAS Dallas in 1969 as was used by VF-703 and its sister squadrons VF-701 and VMF-112. After 1970, VF-703, recommissioned as VF-202, would fly the F-8H. (Arther Schoeni via AAHS)



FIGHTER SQUADRON NINE THREE ONE, VF-931 (VF-34W1)



NAS Willow Grove, Illinois, was home base for VF-931 and its sister squadron VF-932. The squadron transitioned from the North American AF-1E Fury to the Vought F-8B Crusader in 1964. In later years the F-8Bs were supplemented with some F-8As. The "Weekend Warrior" routine came to a halt when on 25 August 1968 the squadron was called to active duty in response to the Pueblo Crisis. The activation orders called for a 24 month tour of duty but as was the case with the other two F-8 units (see VF-661 and VF-703) called to active duty, the squadron was released by the end of the year.

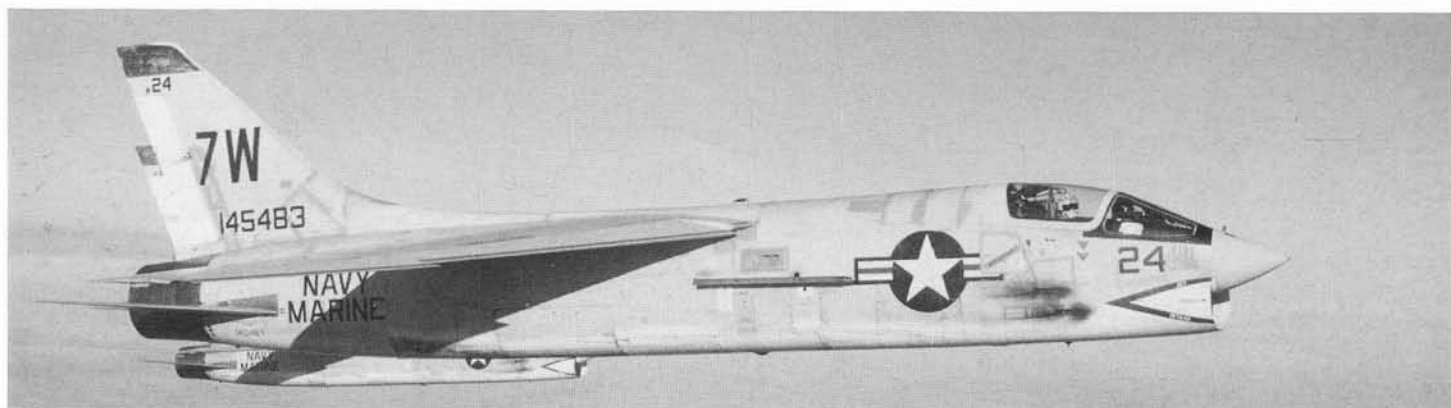
The squadron officially arrived at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, on 21 May 1968. In August VF-931 and VF-661 were detailed to take the places of VF-13 and VF-62 aboard the USS Shangri-La for a January 1969 deployment to the MED. In preparation for this the squadron received F-8Hs that same month. The planned deployment never took place and VF-931 was released from active duty

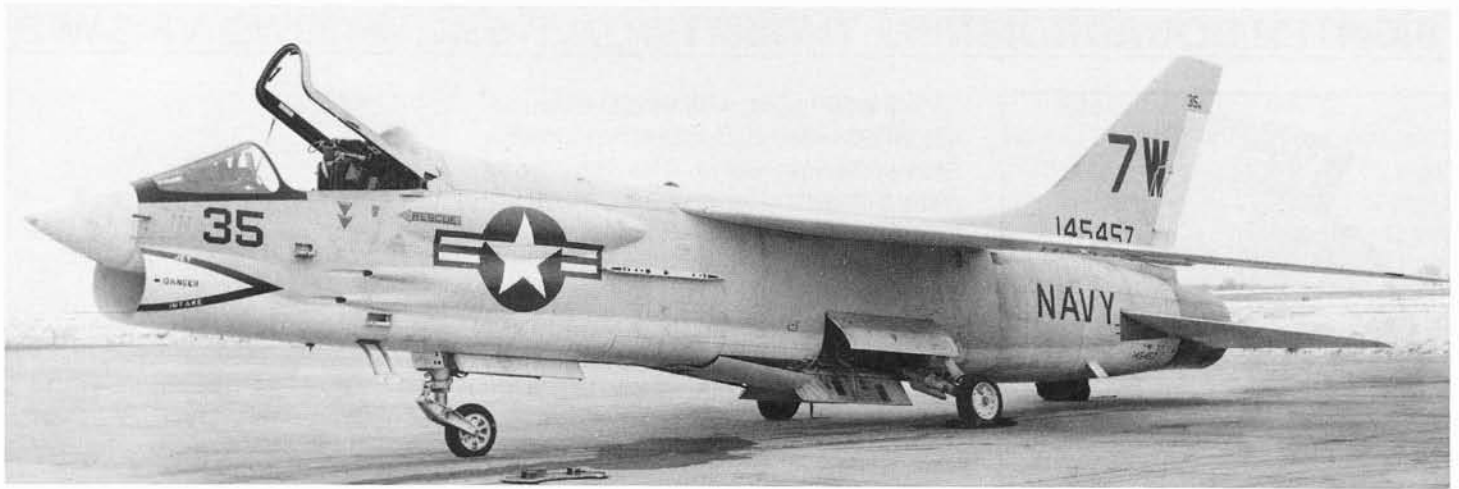
on 16 September 1968 and completed the return to Willow Grove on 1 November. The F-8Hs were left at Cecil and the squadron returned home with F-8As and Bs.

On 1 November 1968, VF-931 was redesignated VF-34W1. In 1969 F-8Ls (remanufactured F-8Bs) were brought in to supplement the F-8As and Bs. Then with the reorganization of the reserves in 1970, the squadron was decommissioned on 1 November 1970. All future F-8 fighter operations were moved to NAS Dallas (see VF-201, VF-202) and to NAS Miramar (see VF-301, VF-302).

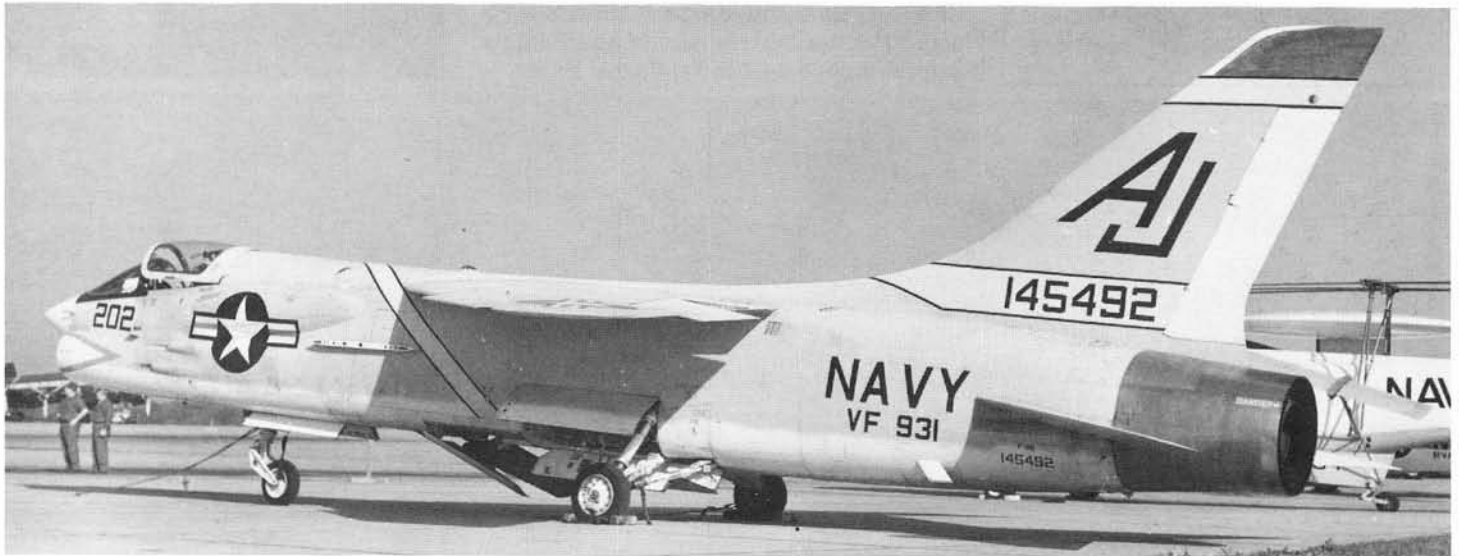
VF-931 shared aircraft with VF-932 and VMF-511. These F-8s had both NAVY and MARINE painted on the fuselage sides to denote this fact.

F-8B 145486, piloted by a VF-931 pilot and wearing only the Marine designation is seen taxiing at Guantanamo Bay in 1965. A black bordered red shield with a white and black liberty bell was located on the tail. (Hogan) F-8B 145483 over the Chocolate Mountain gunnery range near Yuma in 1967. (B. Hogan)





F-8B 145457 as used by VF-931 and VF-932 at NAS Willow Grove in 1965. (R. Esposito via Clay Jansson)



F-8H 147904 was CDR BOB HOGAN's, VF-931 skipper during the recall. Full squadron markings consisting of yellow stripes bordered by black and USS SHANGRI-LA on the aft fuselage were carried when photographed at NAS Cecil Field in late August 1968. (Bob Hogan)

VF-931 F-8B 145492 at NAS Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, in the squadron markings that were developed for the call-up. The fuselage and tail stripes were yellow bordered by black. The "AJ" tail code reflects the squadrons assignment to CVW-8. (R. Esposito via Clay Jansson)



FIGHTER SQUADRON NINE THREE TWO, VF-932 (VF-33W2, VF-34W2)

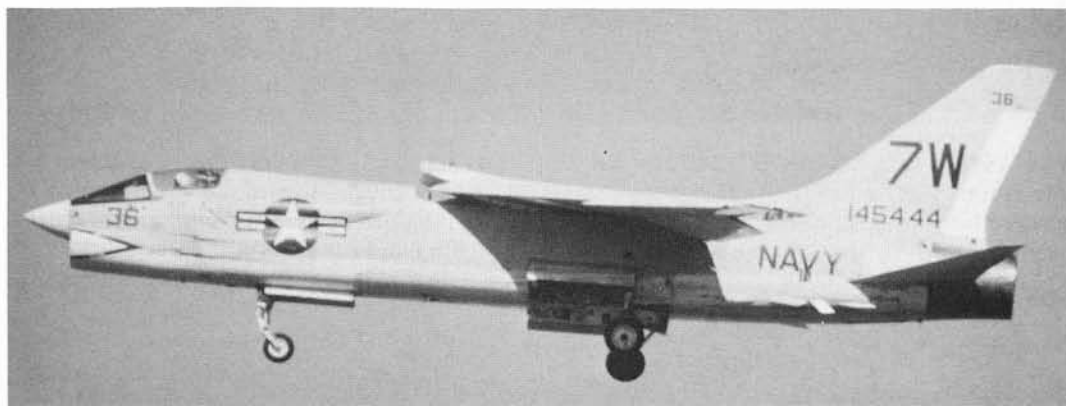


VF-932, along with its sister squadron VF-931 was stationed at NAS Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. The squadrons shared North American AF-1E Furies until they were replaced with Vought F-8B Crusaders in 1964. F-8As were added at a later date and the squadron was redesignated VF-33W2 on 7-1-68. Four months later VF-33W2's designation was changed to VF-34W2 on 11-1-68. The squadron received the prestigious CNO safety award for 1969, the year in which the F-8L was acquired. VF-34W2 was decommissioned on 11-1-70.

LCDR Al Bazer in March 1966 when he was VF-932's XO. He served as VF-932's skipper from 7-1-67 to 7-1-68. (Al Bazer)



The flight line at NAS Willow Grove in 1965. F-8B 145515 is in the foreground, followed by 145486 (#34), 145453 (#27), 145475 (#22) and nine other F-8Bs. Shield on the tail was red bordered by black with a white and black liberty bell. (R. Esposito via Jansson) F-8L 145444 landing at NAS Willow Grove. (unknown) F-8L 145514 at Andrews AFB in August 1970. (D. Kasulka via Clay Jansson)



NAVAL AIR TEST CENTER PATUXENT RIVER, MARYLAND, NATC



Armament Test F8U-1 creating mach-diamonds in afterburner in August 1956. (National Archives)

The Naval Air Test Center (NATC) is located at NAS Patuxent River, Maryland, and is responsible for determining an aircraft's suitability for use with the fleet. In the 1950s, NATC project pilots and engineers were divided among four test divisions: Flight Test (FT) concerned itself with airplane and engine performance, stability and control, and carrier suitability; Service Test (ST) evaluated operational and tactical suitability, emphasizing maintenance; Electronics Test (ET) reported on all avionics equipment; and Armament Test (AT) conducted an evaluation of the airplane as a weapons platform.

Additionally, the NATC supplied an evaluation team to the contractor's plant for a Navy Preliminary Evaluation (NPE), a formal series of tests with the prototype models prior to the production aircraft's arrival at PAX River. The Board of Inspection and Survey (BIS), while independent of the NATC, also conducted fleet suitability evaluations using the test center's aircraft. Finally, Service Test Division aircraft and personnel later were involved in the Fleet Introductory Program (FIP), which trained the first squadron pilots and ground crews scheduled to operate a new airplane in the fleet.



Contractors F8U-1 #346 (141346) in overall natural metal finish, conducting aerial refueling tests with NATC AJ-2 124158 in February 1957. The Crusader was initially built without refueling gear. (National Archives)





Weapons Test F8U-2 145560 on 29 November 1961 with a target tow rig installed on the forward fuselage and a TDU-22 target on the NADC-developed wing pylon. (USN)

Weapons Test F-8C 145553 at a Naval Air Test Center air show open house at NAS Patuxent River. The stylized "W" on the tail was in da-glo red-orange. (D. Ostrowski via Menard)



Weapons Test F-8E 150889 at NAS Patuxent River (PAX River). The stylized "W" was used on this aircraft also. (D. Ostrowski)





Flight Test F8U-2N (F-8D) 145548 on 7-8-61. Faded and over-sprayed da-glo red tail, outer wings, nose and test boom are evident. (USN)

Flight Test F-8E 149218 with twelve iron bombs mounted on the wing pylons on 2-17-64. The fuselage is painted with camera reference lines. (D. Ostrowski)



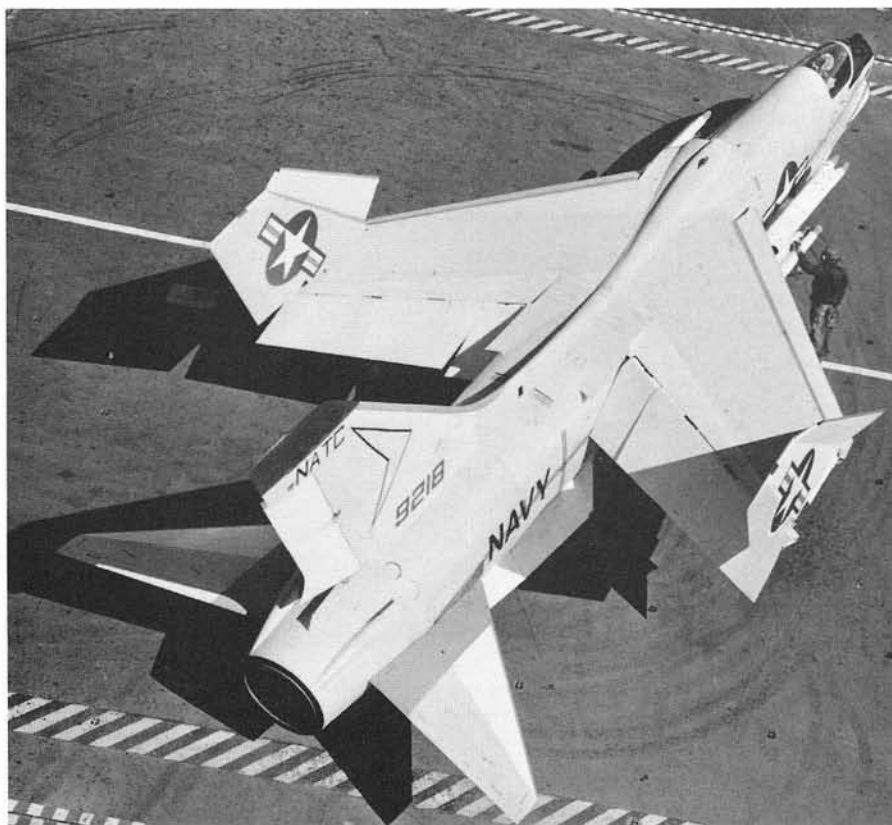
Flight Test F-8E/J on the USS Midway (CVA-41) with a Flight Test A-3 Skywarrior on 8-5-70. (USN)





Flight Test F-8E 149218 on 2-14-64 with eight Zunis and two Bullpups. (D. Ostrowski)

149218 from above with the wing raised and folded. (Arthur Schoeni via AAHS)



Flight Test F-8E 149218 prepares to launch while loaded with eight Zunis and two 2,000 pounders. Mad Bomber character is painted in front of the main gear doors. (USN)





F-8E 149218 on 8-26-67 at NAS Miramar with the wing pylons mounted and the photographic reference lines removed. (Clay Jansson)

Flight Test F-8K 146947 with FLIGHT TEST NAVAL AIR TEST CENTER painted under the wing. Tail and outer wing panels were red. (via Clay Jansson)



Flight Test F-8K 145548 with red tail and outer wing panels basking in the sun after being sent to MASDC, Arizona. (Swisher)





First flight test in a fighter of the Goodyear Omni-Environment Mark-1 Mod-2 full pressure suit by CDR Jack Morrissey on 3-2-57. (National Archives) Service Test YF8U-1 143740 in 1958. (via Burger) Service Test YF8U-1M in 1958 with da-glo aft fuselage, wings, and tail in 1958. Ventral fin stripes were red and white. (via Clay Jansson) Service Test F-8H 147922 with red tail and outer wings on 11-12-73. (Jim Sullivan via Fred Roos)



U. S. NAVAL TEST PILOT SCHOOL, NAS PATUXENT RIVER



The U. S. Naval Test Pilot School (TPS), is located at the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland. The mission of TPS is to train experienced Naval Aviators, Naval Flight Officers, and engineers to become qualified for duty at the various Naval research and development facilities, as well as at the

TPS F-8B 145521 taxiing at PAX River in July 1968. Tail and outer wing panels were red with a black F4D Skyray painted on the tail. (Barry Miller)

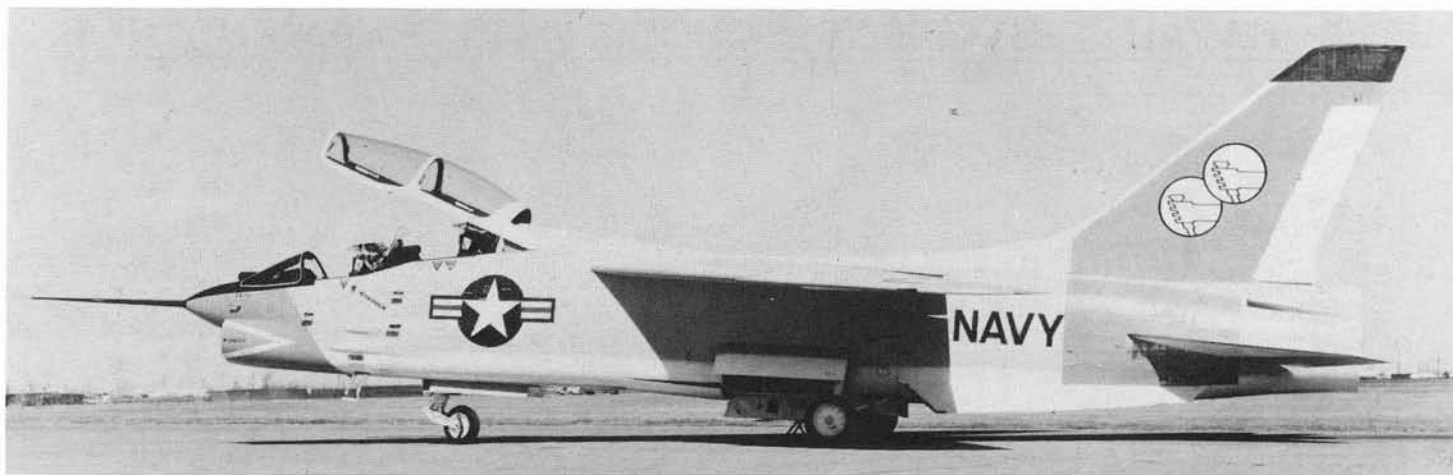
testing centers of the other U. S. military services and those of foreign allies.



TPS F-8K 145584 on 4-21-71 with red tail, nose and outer wing panels. U. S. NAVAL TEST PILOT SCHOOL is painted on the fuselage under the wing. (Roger Besecker)

TPS F-8K 145580 in storage at the Military Aircraft Storage and Disposal Center (MASDC) on 3-19-72. Tail, nose and outer wing panels were red. (D. Slowiak via Fred Roos)





TPS TF-8A TWOSADER

In an effort to sell pilot transition and combat efficiency trainer aircraft to the Navy, Vought modified the 74th production F-8A, 143710, into a dual control tandem seat aircraft designated F8U-1T (TF-8A). As a one-of-a-kind prototype, the Twosader was given to the Test Pilot School and performed extremely well. While at Patuxent River the aircraft wore da-glo red tail, nose and wing markings.



SEVENTH FLEET FLYING BROTHERS



A U.S.-Asian Fighter Weapons Conference was held at Clark AFB, Philippines, in 1959. For this conference the Seventh Fleet put together a team for the competition called the "Flying Brothers". The team was equipped with F8U-1 Crusaders but was unable to compete because the competition was in close air support, skip bombing, air-to-ground rocket-firing, glide bombing and strafing. Because of this the F8Us were replaced by A4D Skyhawks in subsequent competitions. Markings were red check marks with a white 7 and black FLEET on the forward fuselage and black FLYING BROTHERS on the tail.

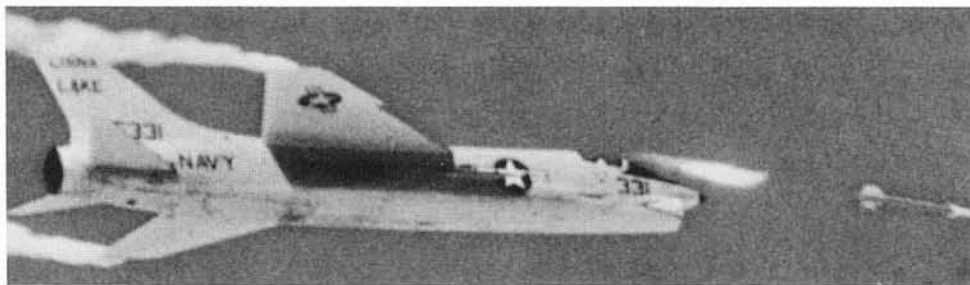


NAVAL WEAPONS CENTER, CHINA LAKE, CALIFORNIA



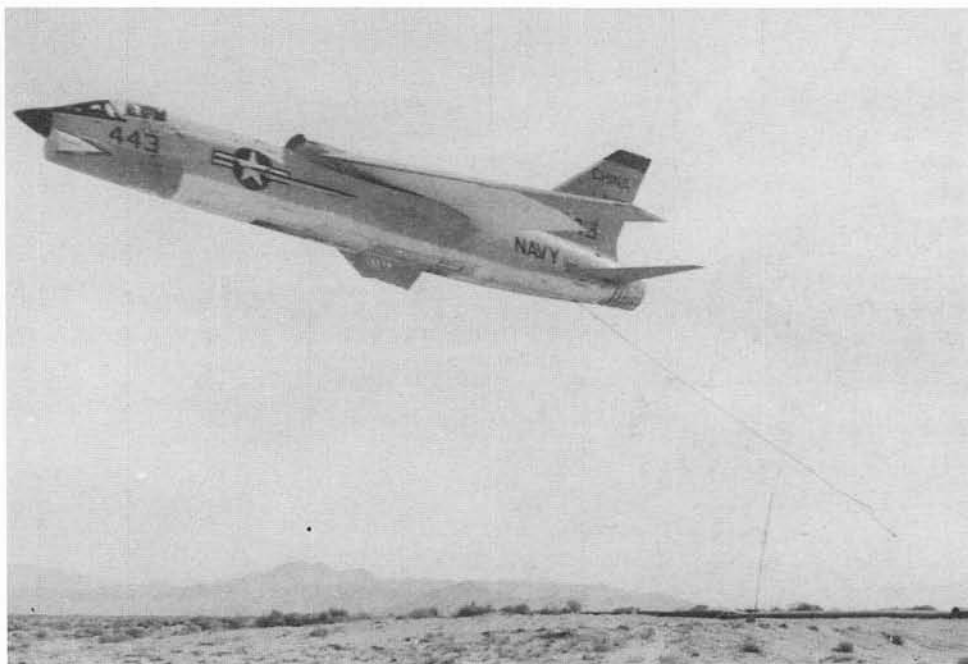
The Naval Weapons Center, China Lake, formerly Naval Ordnance Test Center (NOTS), is responsible for research, development, test and evaluation of naval air launched weapons and weapon systems. Over the years the center has also been called on to take part in underwater programs such as ASROC. The center has developed and tested the following weapons; 5" HVAR, Tiny Tim, Mighty Mouse, Zuni, Shrike, and Sidewinder.

F8U-1 144430 equipped with a Del-Mar tow rig consisting of a wing mounted black target housing and a fuselage mounted silver wind-driven cable reel. As with 145443, 144430's lower forward fuselage, tail and outer wings were da-glo red. (William Swisher 11-18-61)



F8U-1 (F-8A) 145331 with CHINA LAKE painted on its tail, fires a red-bodied Sidewinder from its fuselage missile rail during ongoing testing of improved Sidewinders. (USN via Barry Miller)

China Lake-based F8U-1 145443 conducting an aerial pick-up or extraction of a ground object, probably a target. The lower fuselage, outer wings, and tail were da-glo red. (R. Harrison, Candid Aero)





DF-8F 143699 with red tail and outer wings and with the last three digits of the BuNo on the nose on 1-28-67. (Jansson)

DF-8F 143813 awaiting scrapping in 1971. Colors were drone director colors, see page 26 for description. (via Burger)

DF-8F 145351 at China Lake on 5-9-70 with red outer wings and tail. (G. Liang via Fred Roos)

F-8H 147057 at China Lake on 11-17-70 with Agile AAM missile mock-ups on the lower "Y" fuselage mounts and the wing pylons. (USN)





Three China Lake test aircraft from above, which shows off the location of CHINA LAKE on the upper wings in 1958. Top to bottom; Vought F8U-1 Crusader, McDonnell F3H-2 Demon, and Douglas F3D-2 SkyKnight. All three aircraft were armed with two Sidewinders. (USN)

China Lake-based F-8E 150284 on 3-16-67. Tail and outer wings were once again red. Notice how a border of white was painted around the stars-and-bars to help them stand out against the red of the wing. (Clay Jansson)



PACIFIC MISSILE RANGE / NAVAL MISSILE CENTER, NMC / PACIFIC MISSILE TEST CENTER, PMTC



NAS Point Mugu, California, is home for the aircraft assigned to PMTC. The basic mission of the test center is to take new and existing missile systems and to develop and refine their usage so they can be integrated into the fleet.

F8U-1D 141345 on 4-22-61. (Bill Swisher)
DF-8F 144431 on 10-18-64. (Clay Jansson)
DF-8F 143703 on 5-15-65. (Bill Swisher)
Aircraft 141345 and 144431 were painted with da-glo red outer wings and tail. The F8U-1D was used as drone director aircraft and the DF-8Fs were target tugs.





DF-8A 143771 on 10-21-62 with the da-glo tail and outer wings and with the last 3 digits of the BuNo repeated on the nose. DF-8As were employed as drone control aircraft for the Regulus II missile program. (William Swisher)



DF-8F 144449 on 5-20-67. (William Swisher) DF-8F 143691 in 11-69. (Harry Gann) Both aircraft have the red tail and outer wings





DF-8F 143693 in 11-69 in drone director colors as described on page 26 and as shown in the color section. (Harry Gann)



F-8J 150920 (#107) with the Naval Missile Center insignia on the tail. The triangle was white with the lower quadrant red, upper left navy blue and upper right powder blue. Behind the triangle were two stylized boomerangs with the upper one red and the lower one navy blue. NMC was painted in red. (Stan Wyckoff)





DF-8F 143699 at Point Mugu on 10-17-70. This target tug was previously used at China Lake. (via Burger)

DF-8L 145450 at Mugu on 7-6-72. These were drone control aircraft for QF-86Fs and Hs. (Clay Jansson)



DF-8L 145498 during The Space Fair at NAS Point Mugu on 10-23-72. (William Swisher)





On 26 April 1975 the Test Center adopted a new insignia as worn on the tail of these Crusaders. The triangle was dark blue with a gold eagle and anchor. The stars and the ocean line were white.



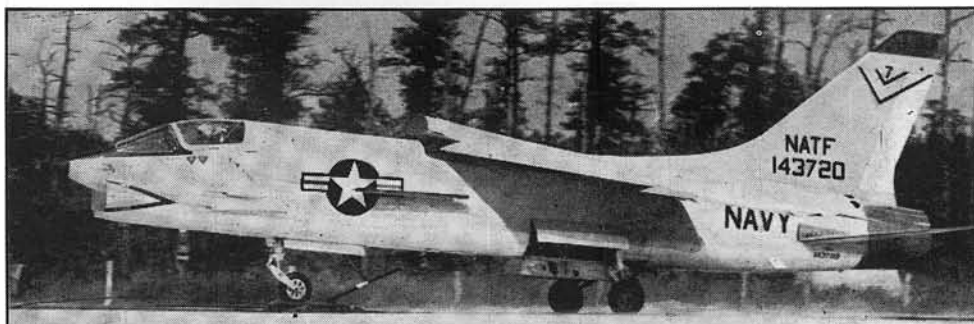
PMTC DF-8L with external power plugged in prior to Mugu's 10-76 Air Show. (B. Miller)
DF-8L 145450 in 10-76; tail stripe was medium blue. (Ginter)



DF-8J 150302 being towed at the NAS Point Mugu Air Show in October 1977. The gun ports were black as well as the intake lips and the stripe behind the radome. (via Burger)
DF-8J 150297 at Scott AFB on 9-24-77. Sensors have been added to either side of the intakes and a blade antennae has been added to the radome. (L. Reynolds via Fred Roos)



NAVAL AIR TEST FACILITY (SI) NAS LAKEHURST, N. J.



NATF F-8A 143720 launches from a ground-based catapult developed for the Marines. (USN) Ex VC-7 F-8A 145412 was used for barricade tests in 1966. (Esposito) F-8L 145419. (Besecker) F-8D 147046 in 1967; tail is da-glo red. (Esposito via Jansson)

The Naval Air Test Center (ships installations) was established at NAS Lakehurst, N. J., on 1 October 1957. Utilizing 11 test sites, the test facility's primary mission was to develop catapult and arresting systems for both land and sea.

NATF F-8s wore a red-orange tail triangle bordered by thin white and black stripes. F-8L 145419 below sports an added red tail.



NAVAL AIR DEVELOPMENT CENTER (NADC), NAS JOHNSVILLE, PA.



NADC was originally designated the Naval Air Development Station. Because of continued growth at the station, the Naval Air Development Center, NAS Johnsville, Pennsylvania, was established on 1 August 1949. The Development Center was given the primary mission of providing design and development of aircraft electronics, aviation armament and pilotless aircraft. To accomplish its mission, NADC Johnsville flew a mixed bag of fleet aircraft including the Crusader.

NADC flew at least two F-8A Crusaders as shown below. In addition to the fighter variant of the Crusader, NADC Johnsville flew at least four Photo-Eights (see Naval Fighters Number Seventeen, Vought's F-8 Crusader Part Two, Navy and Marine RF-8 Photo-Recon Squadrons). Below, F-8A 145443 stands display duty with a Douglas A-3 Skywarrior in May 1966. Sharkmouth is red with white teeth and black lips. (Besecker) F-8A 144435 in 1965 with the remnants of the base insignia on the tail. (R. Esposito via Clay Jansson)



THUNDERBIRD AVIATION F-8K N19TB

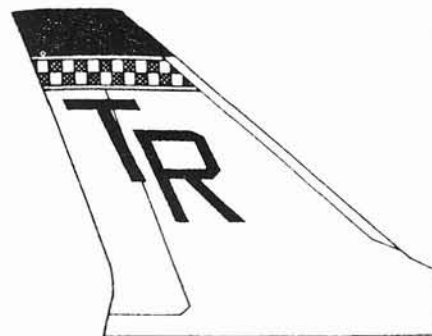


The Crusader did make it into the 1990s as evidenced by this Thunderbird Aviation F-8K at Miramar in August 1990. Colors were overall grey with blue T-bird, nose number and "N" number. Wing pylon and tail stripe were gold and blue. (Ginter)

FLEET AIR GUNNERY UNIT, PACIFIC (FAGU)



The Fleet Air Gunnery Unit, Pacific, provided aerial gunnery training for Navy and Marine pilots from NAAS El Centro, California, and from MCAAS Yuma after mid 1959. A small number of F8U-1s, FJ-4Bs, A4D-2s, and F4D-1s were used by FAGU. The FAGU F8U-1 pictured below carried a red and white checkerboard stripe on the tail.



F-8 PRODUCTION

MODEL	PREVIOUS DOD DESIGNATION(S)	NO. BUILT	BUREAU NUMBER(S)	NOTES
YF-8A	XF8U-1, XF-8A	2	138899-138901	138901 canceled, became static test article
F-8A	F8U-1	3	140444-140448	140447-140448 modified, became YF-8C prototypes
F-8A	F8U-1	27	141336-141363	141363 modified, became YRF-8A prototype
F-8A	F8U-1	8	142408-142415	
F-8A	F8U-1	144	143677-143821	143710 modified, became YF-8E prototype No. 1, then YTF-8A prototype
F-8A	F8U-1	35	144427-144461	
F-8A	F8U-1		144462-144606	145-plane order, canceled
F-8A	F8U-1	97	145318-145415	145318 modified, became YF-8B prototype
YRF-8A	YF8U-1P	1	141363	modified F-8A
YF-8B	YF8U-1E	1	145318	modified F-8A
F-8B	F8U-1E	130	145416-145545	62 to F-8L
RF-8A	F8U-1P	19	144607-144625	13 to RF-8G
RF-8A	F8U-1P	44	145604-145647	27 to RF-8G
RF-8A	F8U-1P	80	146822-146901	32 to RF-8G
RF-8A	F8U-1P		146902-146905	4-plane order, canceled
RF-8A	F8U-1P		147078-147084	7-plane order, canceled
NTF-8A	YF8U-1T, YTF-8A, TF-8A	1	143710	modified F-8A, became YF-8E No. 1, then YTF-8A prototype, TF-8A
TF-8A			145648-145659	12-plane order, canceled
YF-8C	XF8U-2, XF-8C	2	140447-140448	modified F-8As
F-8C	F8U-2	58	145546-145603	28 to F-8K
F-8C	F8U-2	129	146906-147036	147035-147036 modified, became YF-8D prototypes, 58 to F-8K
YF-8D	YF8U-2N	2	147035-147036	modified F-8Cs
F-8D	F8U-2N	36	147037-147072	24 to F-8H
F-8D	F8U-2N		147073-147077	5-plane order, canceled
F-8D	F8U-2N	30	147896-147925	16 to F-8H
F-8D	F8U-2N	84	148627-148710	49 to F-8H
F-8D	F8U-2N		148711-148715	5-plane order, canceled
YF-8E	YF8U-2NE	1	143710	modified F-8A, became YTF-8A, then YF-8E prototype No. 1
YF-8E	YF8U-2NE	1	147036	modified F-8C, became YF-8D No. 2, YF-8E number 2, then YF-8E (FN) prototype
F-8E	F8U-2NE	94	149134-149227	45 to F-8J
F-8E	F8U-2NE	72	150284-150355	33 to F-8J
F-8E	F8U-2NE	30	150654-150683	17 to F-8J
F-8E	F8U-2NE	90	150843-150932	41 to F-8J
YF-8E(FN)	YF8U-2NE(FN)	1	147036	modified F-8C, became YF-8D No. 2, YF-8E number 2, then YF-8E(FN) French prototype
F-8E(FN)	F8U-2NE(FN)	42	151732-151775	44-plane French Navy order, 151774-151775
F-8F(RN)				proposed Royal Navy two-seater version
XF8U-3		2	146340-146341	
F8U-3		1	147085-147100	16-plane order, canceled, only 147085 completed as flyable





BACK COVER:
 VF-111 F-8H 148677
 from the Shangri-La
 in 6-70. (B. Miller)
 VF-24 F-8J 150340
 over Vietnam. (USN)
 Three VF-211 F-8Js
 from the Hancock in
 7-73. 150905 (#101),
 149195 (#102), and
 149215 (#104). (USN)
 Naval Missile Center
 DF-8F 144449 on
 8-4-71. (USN)

THIS PAGE:
 VF-62 F-8C 150351
 in 4-65. (USN)
 VF-302 F-8K. (USN)
 VU-4 F-8Cs 146933
 (#2) and 145588 (#3)
 on 4-13-65. (USN)
 VF-661 F-8H 147047
 in 8-68. ("Buz" War-
 field)
 VU-7 F8U-1 143746
 on 11-19-62. (USN)



